

ORIENTAL BIRD CLUB



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THE ORIENTAL BIRD CLUB aims to:

- * encourage an interest in the birds of the Oriental region and their conservation.
- * liaise with and promote the work of existing regional societies.
- * collate and publish material on Oriental birds.

Two bulletins and a journal, *Forktail*, are published annually.

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Richard Grimmett, Tim Inskipp, Paul Jepson, Nigel Redman, Craig Robson, Helen Taylor (Editor).

Membership of OBC

Membership of the Club is open to all and costs £12 per annum (£8 reduced rate for nationals living in Oriental countries), and £20 for corporate members (organisations, libraries and universities). Special arrangements for payment in USA, Thailand and India. To join or for further details please contact the Membership Secretary, OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2LD, UK.

Cover illustration: White-winged Wood Duck *Cairina scutulata* by Libby Millington.

Editorial

This 14th edition of the OBC *Bulletin* is the sixth and final one which I shall be editing. It is an appropriate time for change as we hope that it will also be the last one of the present design. In recent years a number of small improvements have been made to the quality of production but it is now felt to be time for a more radical shake up. We will be analysing with interest the great number of questionnaires which members returned; more than one in ten members replied. The comments you gave on the content will help us to take a critical look at how well we are providing the sort of publication you want and to make changes as appropriate.

I am certain that my successor, Adrian Long, will be the right person to see these changes through, bringing a fresh enthusiasm and many new ideas to the *Bulletin*. He has in fact done most of the production for this edition and liaised with many of the authors and artists for which I thank him.

Melanie Heath, Jonathan Eames and Crawford Prentice have also assisted in putting this bulletin together, and as always the Club is very grateful to the International Council for Bird Preservation for the use of their facilities. I would also like to thank Dave Farrow, Bas van Balen, Craig Robson, Nigel Lindsay, Richard Grimmett and Libby Millington who have all provided illustrations.



Club News

1991 AGM in London

The 1991 AGM will be held at the Zoological Society meeting rooms, Regents Park, London on Saturday 14 December. The meeting will begin earlier than in past years at 10.30 AM and finish at approximately 5.30 PM. There will be talks, including a presentation by Urban Olsson on 'Warbler identification in the Orient', refreshments and many items for sale, especially books. Please see the enclosed flyer for more details.

New Chairman for OBC

In July Paul Jepson, the Club's Chairman, left the UK to take up a post on behalf of ICBP in Indonesia. This exciting opportunity for Paul unfortunately forced him to

resign as Chairman of OBC. Although Paul had only been Chairman for a year and a half he had already proved himself to be most able and conscientious and his plans to carry the Club forward over the next few years had been carefully thought out. His wise guidance at Council meetings based on his considerable experience of the Oriental region and his passion for conservation, was much appreciated by all. Naturally we all wish to thank Paul for his work as Chairman and wish him every success in the future. We very much hope that he will rejoin Council on his return to the UK but in the meantime he is already advising us on conservation matters in Indonesia!

Council has appointed Nigel Redman to succeed Paul as Chairman of OBC. Like his two predecessors, Nigel was one of the original group of people who conceived the idea of the Oriental Bird Club and was the Club's first Treasurer. Nigel has travelled extensively throughout the Oriental region and has been involved in many of the Club's activities over the past seven years.

Sales News

The Blue Pitta T-shirt has proved very popular with almost 200 sold so far. A similar style of T-shirt, perhaps portraying a male Banded Kingfisher by Martin Woodcock is a project earmarked for next year. The higher quality shirts seem to have been well received and members may be interested to know that these shirts are bleached using hydrogen peroxide, not chlorine, so reducing pollution associated with the bleaching process. The Club sweatshirt and flying Hornbill T-shirt are still available. Please use the enclosed order form to purchase these items.

The link with the Birds and Wildlife Bookshops is progressing well. The potential funds accruing to the Club and the service provided to members through this link is far superior to anything the Club could have achieved had it continued its previous arrangements. If not using the enclosed order form, members purchasing books on the Oriental region should inform shop staff of their membership so that the the Club benefits from the sales.

Thanks to all members (and non-members) who support OBC financially by purchasing Club merchandise.

Membership News

As announced in the last Bulletin, OBC subscription rates will be increased from 1 January 1992, after four years at the current rates.

Please use the subscription renewal form enclosed with this Bulletin to renew your membership for next year. You are invited to renew for up to three years in advance, if this helps to reduce bank charges, or is more convenient for you.

We would be grateful if all members with existing standing orders to OBC at the old rates will complete and return the new form before the end of 1991. The new standing order will automatically cancel the old one, so there is no need to contact your bank. A prompt response will minimise the administrative work for us, and the inconvenience to individual members.

Finally, please be sure to let us know if you change your address; we lose touch with a number of members each year who forget to tell us that they have moved.

Manchester Meeting a Great Success

The third summer meeting of the Oriental Bird Club held in Manchester on 22 June focussed on the birds of the Himalayas. The afternoon started with Tom Roberts introducing the audience to the birds of the western Himalaya, including Black and Yellow Grosbeak *Coccothraustes icterioides*, White-cheeked Nuthatch *Sitta leucopsis*, and the endangered Western Tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus*. He was followed by Simon Delaney talking about the results of a series of expeditions by Southampton University looking at migration through Ladakh and its wintering birds. After the interval, Adam Davidson described the delights of travelling and birdwatching in Nepal. The meeting was concluded by Tim Loseby showing excellent slides of the birds of Assam and Sikkim. After the meeting there was a social gathering in one of Manchester's Indian restaurants.

OBC at the British Birdwatching Fair

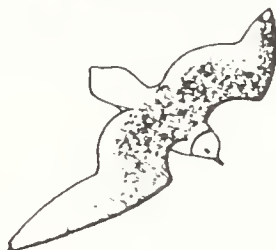
The Oriental Bird Club was, for the second year running, represented at the British Birdwatching Fair. The event provides an excellent opportunity to publicise the work of the Club within the UK. The Club's display was well attended on all three days and a number of people joined and several hundred pounds were raised.

Today, over 1,000 of the world's bird species are threatened with extinction. The International Council for Bird Preservation is acting to reverse this global catastrophe and needs your support now.



To join, please send a cheque/P.O. for £25 to:
ICBPWorld Bird Club
32 Cambridge Road
Girton, Cambridge CB3 0PJ U.K.

DUTCH BIRDING

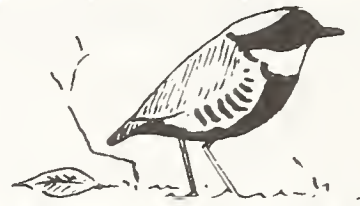


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For information write to:
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Conservation Fund



During 1991 the Club has awarded a far greater number of survey grants for conservation work than in previous years. This has very largely been possible because of the great success of the 1990 Grand Raffle. Once again we would like to warmly thank those who bought tickets and *Leica Camera*, *Nikon* and others who generously donated the raffle prizes. OBC's conservation fund also receives much appreciated contributions from donations, raffles held at our meetings, and profits from sales of refreshments at meetings.

Please remember you can easily support OBC's conservation work by adding a donation when you re-subscribe for 1992.

Survey Grants - Applications Welcome

The OBC is able to make available survey grants of up to £300 for suitable projects. Applications are welcomed at any time of year. To apply or to discuss the work you plan to do please contact the Club's Conservation Officer, Carol Inskipp.

Nicobar Scrubfowl study - Forktail Leica Award Winner 1989

René Dekker, winner of the Forktail Leica Award for 1989, unfortunately had to postpone his study of the Nicobar Megapode once again because of his new appointment as Curator of Birds at the National Museum of Natural History in Leiden, The Netherlands. We are very pleased to hear from René that the study will now be going ahead in February 1992.

Study of the Black-necked Cranes in Bhutan

A grant of £400 has been awarded to Col. T. Chacko (retired) for a co-ordinated study of Black-necked Cranes at all of their known feeding and roosting areas in Bhutan which he is organising this winter. In spite of various studies for short periods in Bhutan, many aspects of the cranes' behaviour are still unknown. Bhutanese observers from the Royal Forestry Department, Royal Society for the Protection of Nature and from the Nature Club of Sherubtse College will record the numbers of adult and juvenile cranes, the bird's migration patterns, roosting areas, feeding habits, and the effect of human activities on the birds and their habitats. All observers will communicate by radio so making possible this first co-ordinated study of the Black-necked Cranes in Bhutan.

Chinese ornithologist's win Forktail Leica Award for 1990

Winners of the Club's 1990 *Forktail Leica Award* are He Fen-qi and Zhang Yin-sun from the Department of Zoology, Academia Sinica, Beijing, China with a project to study the breeding ecology of the Relict Gull *Larus relictus*.

The Relict Gull is very poorly known and is listed as globally threatened by the International Council for Bird Preservation. It wasn't until 1968 that the breeding grounds of this bird were discovered. Previous ornithological studies in the region spanning more than a hundred years had failed even to appreciate the existence of the species. In spring 1990 He Fen-qi and Zhang Yin-sun discovered one of the Relict Gull's largest known breeding populations at Taolimiao-Alashan Nur in the Ordos Highlands, Inner Mongolia.

With funding from the *Forktail Leica Award*, which is generously sponsored by Leica Camera, they returned to the area this year and found an even bigger colony at a new site in Ordos. They estimated that there were 624 nests here but during their study noted a high mortality rate amongst the chicks. They believe this was caused by the setting of nets at the breeding site and have delivered a special report to the Chinese Wildlife Conservation Association concerning this human disturbance. A general survey was also made of the population and dispersal of the gull around the lakes in the Maowusu desert. Relict Gulls were found at ten of the 21 lakes visited, two of these had breeding colonies and another held a large flock of non-breeding birds.

During the course of their study Zhang Yin-Sun and He Fen-qi collected data on other wetland birds which they report below.

Fieldwork undertaken in 1990 and 1991 at Taolimiao-Alashan Nur showed that not only was it an important breeding area for the Relict Gull, but that it also sustains a great variety of wetland birds. Table 1 shows the 71 species of birds recorded during April, May and June 1991 and their status based on our observations. Of these birds 15 were identified as breeding and are shown in Table 2. The Little Grebe, Spot-billed Duck and Shoveler were noted as breeding



Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyæetus* by Dave Farrow

Table 1: Species recorded at Taolimiao-Alashan Nur during April to June 1991.

English Name	Scientific Name	Status
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus niglicollis</i>	B
Red-necked Grebe	<i>P. grisegena</i>	M
Great Crested Grebe	<i>P. cristatus</i>	S(B?)
Horned Grebe	<i>P. auritus</i>	M
Black-necked Grebe	<i>P. nigricollis</i>	B
Spot-billed Pelican	<i>Pelecanus philippensis</i>	M
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	S
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	S
Purple Heron	<i>A. purpurea</i>	M
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	M
Oriental Stork	<i>Ciconia boyciana</i>	S
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	M
Swan Goose	<i>Anser cygnoides</i>	M
Bean Goose	<i>A. fabalis</i>	M
Greylag Goose	<i>A. anser</i>	S
Bar-headed Goose	<i>A. indicus</i>	S(?)
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	B
Common Shelduck	<i>T. tadorna</i>	B
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>A. penelope</i>	S
Falcated Duck	<i>A. falcata</i>	M
Gadwall	<i>A. strepera</i>	M
Common Teal	<i>A. crecca</i>	M
Mallard	<i>A. platyrhynchos</i>	M
Spot-billed Duck	<i>A. poecilorhyncha</i>	B
Northern Pintail	<i>A. acuta</i>	M
Garganey	<i>A. querquedula</i>	S
Northern Shoveler	<i>A. clypeata</i>	B
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Nettion rufina</i>	M
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	S(B?)
Ferruginous Pochard	<i>A. nyroca</i>	M
Tufted Duck	<i>A. fuligula</i>	M
Greater Scaup	<i>A. marila</i>	M
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	S
Smew	<i>Mergus albellus</i>	M
Common Merganser	<i>M. merganser</i>	M
Baillon's Crane	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>	M
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	M
Common Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	S(B?)

English Name	Scientific Name	Status
Demoiselle Crane	<i>Anthropoides virgo</i>	S(B?)
Oriental Pratincole	<i>Glareola maldivarum</i>	M
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	B
Pied Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	B
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	B
Kentish Plover	<i>C. alexandrinus</i>	B
Caspian Plover	<i>C. asiaticus</i>	M
Asiatic Golden-Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	M
Grey-headed Lapwing	<i>Vancellus cinereus</i>	S
Northern Lapwing	<i>V. vanellus</i>	B
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	M
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	M
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	M
Eurasian Curlew	<i>N. arquata</i>	M
Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	M
Common Redshank	<i>T. totanus</i>	B
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>T. stagnatilis</i>	M
Common Greenshank	<i>T. nebularia</i>	M
Green Sandpiper	<i>T. ochropus</i>	M
Wood Sandpiper	<i>T. glareola</i>	M
Common Sandpiper	<i>T. hypoleucos</i>	M
Grey-tailed Tattler	<i>T. brevipes</i>	M
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	S(B?)
Great Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ichthyaeus</i>	M
Relict Gull	<i>L. relicus</i>	B
Common Black-headed Gull	<i>L. ridibundus</i>	S
Black-tailed Gull	<i>L. crassirostris</i>	S(B?)
Herring Gull	<i>L. argentatus</i>	M
Gull-billed Tem	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	B
Common Tem	<i>Sterna hirsundo</i>	B
Little Tem	<i>S. albifrons</i>	M
Whiskered Tem	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	M
White-winged Tem	<i>C. leucopetra</i>	M

B = Breeder; S = Summerer; M = Migrant

but also seen on passage in larger numbers. Relict Gulls were nesting in a colony together with Gull-billed Terns and there was obviously some competition and interdependence between these two species. During June of this year the largest flock of resident ducks at the lake was 400 Common Pochard, Moorhen was also abundant with some 200 birds noted. Two new records for the Ordos were Oriental Stork, unusual in such a desert habitat, and the Bar-headed Goose.

Table 2. Number and location of nests at Taolimiao-Alashen Nur.

Species	Nesting Site				
	island	sand dune	water surface	shoal	lake shore
<i>Podiceps fuficollis</i>			•		
<i>P. nigricollis</i>	●				
<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>		•			
<i>T. tadorna</i>		•			
<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>	•				
<i>A. clypeata</i>					•
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>					●
<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	•			•	
<i>C. alexandrinus</i>	•			•	
<i>Tringa totanus</i>		•			
<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>	•			•	
<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	•			•	
<i>Larus relictus</i>	●				
<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	●			●	
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	•				

more than 400 nests ●; 200-300 nests ●; 50-100 nests ●; 10-20 nests ●; below 10 nests •

Funding for Study of Sula Scrubfowl

The Sula Scrubfowl *Megapodius bernsteinii* is a Wallacean endemic megapode found only on the Sula and Banggai islands off Sulawesi, Indonesia. Virtually nothing is known of its ecology, behaviour or current status, although it is thought to be suffering from over-harvesting of eggs and over-hunting of adult birds. A grant of £320 from OBC will fund Yunus Masala, one of a small team of Indonesians led by Mochamad Indrawan who are studying the species between September 1991 and April 1992. The aims are to establish baseline information on the Sula Scrubfowl's population size, status and the effects of egg harvesting and hunting in order to develop and implement a conservation and management strategy for the species.

Re-appraisal of the Great Himalayan National Park

Following extensive wildlife surveys in Kullu District in Himachal Pradesh in 1979 and 1980 an area of 1,716 sq km was designated as a national park. Bird species found included the threatened Cheer Pheasant *Catreus wallichii* and Western Tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus*. A re-appraisal of the park will be carried between September 1991 and March 1992 lead by Peter Garson and Tony Gaston. A grant of £330 from OBC will support six Indian team members for one month. The objectives are to review the present boundaries of the core area and buffer zone, review the objectives and extent of implementation of park management policies, study the activities of herb collectors and pastoralists, and survey the birds and mammals.

Biological diversity of Khao Sam Roi Yot Marsh

A grant of £500 was awarded to John Parr to carry out a biological diversity survey of the marsh at Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park. The park lies in peninsula Thailand and includes an area of coastal marsh, paddies, patches of degraded mangrove and the largest freshwater marsh in Thailand. All the low-lying habitat within the park is threatened by intensified illegal use by local people. The survey aims to assess this rapidly increasing encroachment and other threats, and to carry out a biodiversity study of the marsh. John Parr has already submitted a preliminary report to the Club which has highlighted the grave threats to the marsh. More detail and advice on how you can help is given in News and Views on page 10.

Cambridge Philippines Rainforest Project 1991

An OBC grant of £300 will help to fund one of four Filipino team members in a Cambridge University expedition to survey threatened birds and mammals of Mindoro and Negros Islands in the Philippines. While comprising only 6.5% of the land area of the Philippines, the islands support 12 of the country's 34 endemic bird species listed as threatened by ICBP. The objectives of the project are to obtain basic ecological data on forest species, and in particular their ability to tolerate degraded forest. This data will be used, together with socio-economic information, to assess the conservation potential of the remaining forest fragments.

Wuliangsu Hai wetland study

A grant of £300 was given to Xing Lianlian, Associate Professor at the University of Inner Mongolia and two colleagues, to study the waterfowl of Wuliangsu Hai in China. This unprotected wetland lies in Inner Mongolia and is listed in the *Asian Wetlands Directory* as an important breeding area for ducks and shorebirds. No other information is available. The objectives of the study are to survey the bird species and threats and to write a report which will include proposals for conservation management measures for submission to the Chinese government.

Vietnamese Forest Working Group

A preliminary report has been received of a survey undertaken by the Vietnamese forest working group which received an OBC grant earlier this year. Details on page 13.

Educating children in Nepal

On 5 June each year, environment related organizations plant trees in Nepal to celebrate World Environment Day. But all year round a group of young enthusiasts plant 'green seeds' in young peoples' mind across the country. By running Environmental Camps for Conservation Awareness (ECCA) last year the Oriental Bird Club's Conservation Fund contributed to these day camps designed to foster awareness and responsibility amongst children about the natural resources existing around them.

The mobile ECCA camps are for 11 to 14 year old children and run by university students who are trained by experts. They concentrate on six areas; health and sanitation, nature walks, natural sciences, technology, arts and crafts, and music and culture.

A variety of teaching methods are used including 'field visits' to the village and surrounding area. In the village, children ask about subjects such as drinking water, income generation sources, household activities, livestock and lifestyles. Out on their nature walks children look at plants, and observe and identify birds with the help of binoculars provided to us from our bird-loving friends from England.

As resources are limited, low cost equipment is generally used. Fortunately friends from abroad have assisted. Equipment recently received from the Oriental Bird Club is a great help in conducting natural science sessions. Pond dipping, studying ecosystems and river pollution surveys, have become more effective and fun with these gadgets.

At present, ECCA is being run in 14 districts with 36 camps a year. ECCA has received grants from IUCN, ITNC, FAO, Panos Institute, WWF/USA and REDD BARNA. Counsellor Training Camps are also held for local youths training them to run their own ECCA camps and fortnightly one day events called Adventure Times involve children in birdwatching, caving, tours of heritage sites, and village socio-economic surveys.

In addition to these three activities ECCA is in the process of forming a Green library and Resource Centre and is looking forward to other opportunities to utilize its resources in local, national and global efforts to preserve our only home - the earth.
Rosha Chitrakar, ECCA Camps, Nepal.

Compiled by Carol Inskipp, OBC Conservation Officer



News and Views

SOUTH-EAST ASIA'S ONLY RAMSAR SITE SURVEYED

A team from the Hanoi University's Wetland and Waterbird Group, Vietnam, and three members of the Australasian Wader Studies Group (AWSG) studied the waders and waterbirds of Xuan Thuy Reserve in the Red River Delta through March and April 1991.

The reserve is the first Ramsar site designated in South-East Asia, yet little was known of its importance as a staging ground for shorebirds. The project aimed to coincide with the northward migration of Palaearctic-breeding waders using the East Asian/West Pacific flyway.

Counts of up to 8,000 shorebirds were made with significant numbers of Curlew Sandpipers *Calidris ferruginea*, Rufous-necked Stints *C. ruficollis* and Greater Sand-Plovers *Charadrius leschenaultii*. The site may be an especially important staging area for the Greater Sand-Plover on migration from its breeding grounds in the Gobi Desert region of northern China and Mongolia to its non-breeding quarters along the northern coast of Australia.

(Source: AWSG News 3)

JAPAN BANS BIRD CATCHING WITH MIST NETS

The Japanese government has banned the use and export of mist nets used to catch wild birds following a proposal by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). From 15 September mist nets will be exported only for research purposes and there will be a revision of the wildlife protection law banning both sale and possession of mist nets in Japan.

(Contributed by Michael Rank)

KHAO SAM ROI YOT NATIONAL PARK THREATENED

Illegal shrimp farming within Thailand's largest freshwater marsh Khao Sam Roi Yot is now threatening the viability of this national park. The site is of importance for many large waterbirds and is one of only two known breeding sites in Thailand for Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*. It is important for a wide selection of marshland birds and in winter supports up to 7,000 Garganey *Anas querquedula* and occasional Greater Spotted Eagles *Aquila clanga*.

In recent years the park has been subjected to massive illegal encroachment for shrimp and fish farms. The extent of this activity within the park's boundaries has led the IUCN Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas to add the park to its list of most threatened parks of the world.

Major threats to the marsh ecosystem include; increased outflow from the River Khao Daeng as a result of illegal dredging; intrusion of saltwater which is destroying the freshwater ecosystem and encouraging more shrimp farm development; road construction impeding the flow of water across the marsh; and now plans to build a golf course.

In 1989 the Siam Society and ICBP voiced concern over the park's future and petitioned the Thai Government, but this did not bring about any positive progress. Recently the issue of corruption and the involvement of influential politicians in the draining of the marsh forced the government to take notice of the illegal activities in the park and in July this year a high level visit took place including the Minister of Agriculture, the Permanent Secretary for Agriculture, the Director General of the Royal Forest Department and other senior forestry officials. However, it still remains unclear as to whether this will result in the sort of positive action which is urgently required.

Conservationists recommend that the following four steps need to be taken: (1) the National Park boundary should be clearly demarcated; (2) a sluice should be built on the River Khao Daeng to restore the hydrological balance and a road bridge constructed over the river to facilitate the flow of water across the marsh; (3) earth embankments surrounding the illegal fish and prawn farms should be destroyed but support should be given to local people who depend on the marsh ecosystem for their livelihoods; (4) a forestry sub-station should be established close to the Ban Got Pi to oversee protection of the site, monitor recovery of the marsh and look at potential development for tourism to the area.

The destruction of Khao Sam Roi Yot has received widespread coverage in the media in Thailand and the government is under pressure to make a decision. Recently it announced an inspection and demarcation of the marsh boundaries and a review of the landownership documents of people living in the park, promising the subsequent removal of illegal settlers. However, it remains to be seen what the outcome will be.

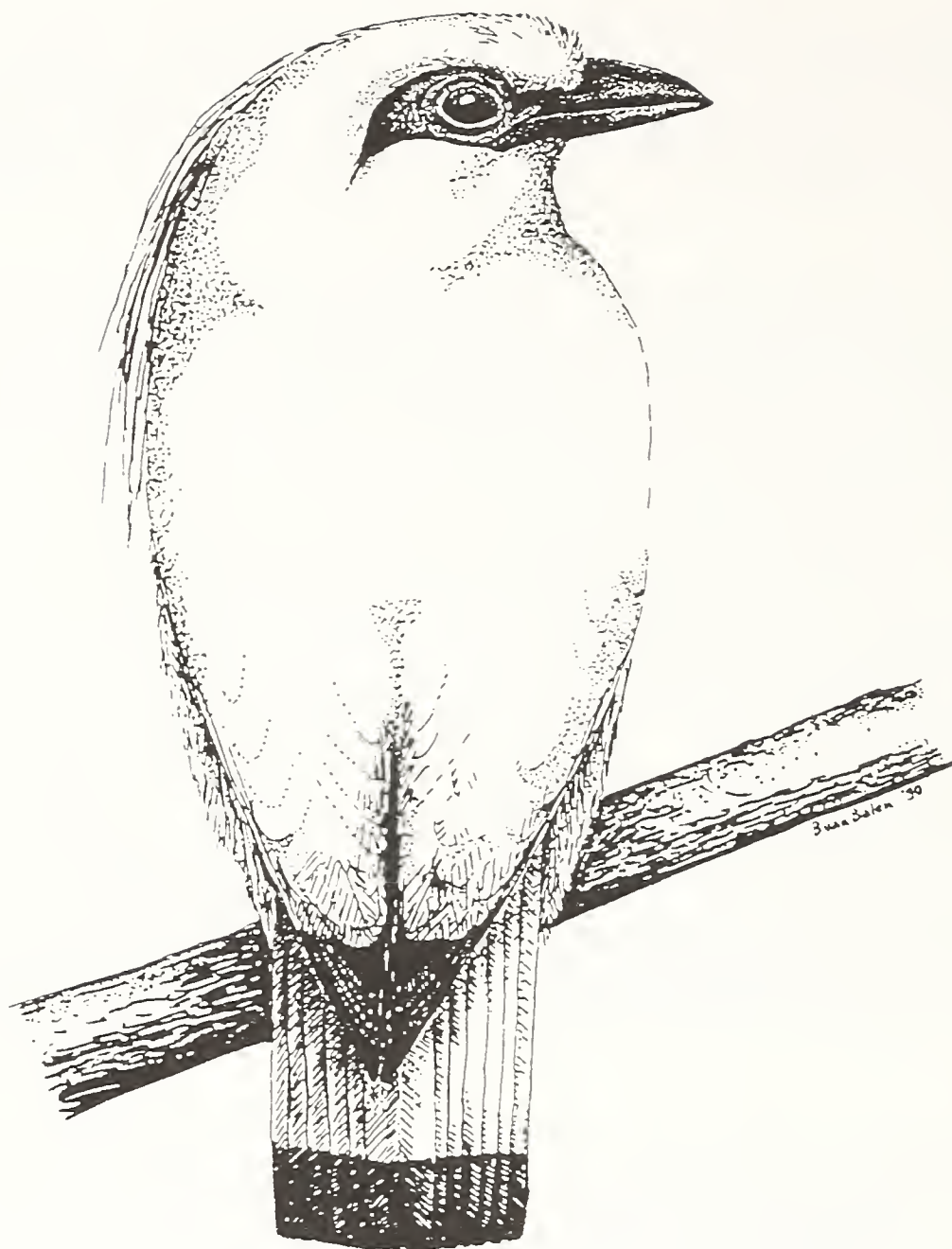
Members are urged to support Thai conservationists by writing to; Mr Anand Panyarachun, The Prime Minister of Thailand, Office of the Prime Minister, Government House, Nakhon Pathon Road, Bangkok 10300, Thailand.

(Contributed by Jonathan Eames)

BALI STARLING - ONE STEP BACK FROM THE EDGE

The 1991 annual population census of the Bali Starling *Leucopsar rothschildi* showed that the number of wild birds has more than doubled since last year. The survey, carried out by The Department of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHPA) and ICBP staff, recorded between 38 and 40 birds. This encouraging recovery has been brought about by improved guarding, coupled with a good breeding season due to an unusually long wet season.

The Bali Starling is one of the world's rarest and most endangered birds and is the provincial symbol of the island of Bali, Indonesia where it is confined to a remote peninsula in the Bali Barat National Park. During the 1980's the population crashed and by 1990 only 18 remained in the wild and the species was on the very edge of extinction.



Bali Starling *Leucopsar rothschildi* by Bas van Balen

The poaching of wild birds has been the principal cause of this decline. Bali Starlings with their beautiful white plumage set off by a white crest and black wing tips are highly prized as cage birds and command high prices on the black market.

Despite the encouraging survey news the population remains dangerously low and during 1992 the joint PHPA/ICBP/American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquaria (AAZPA) project will be intensifying its efforts to secure the future of this species. Activities will include: guard training courses, establishment of a second wild population from captive-bred birds, studies on habitat requirements and awareness and extension work with local people.

CHINA'S BIGGEST HOODED CRANE POPULATION FOUND

China's largest wintering population of Hooded Cranes *Grus monacha* has been discovered at Longgan lake on the Hubei side of the Hubei-Anhui border, about 40 km northeast of the city of Jiujiang. The cranes number about 400, almost doubling the known Chinese population of the species, according to a report in the Chinese magazine

Yesheng Dongwu [Chinese Wildlife] (1990.2). The marshland where the cranes are seen between late October and late March is largely undisturbed in winter and the local authorities have banned hunting over an area of 1,000 hectares to protect the birds. Until now, Hooded Cranes were known to winter in China mainly at Shengjin lake in southern Anhui, which has a population of 200 birds, Poyang lake in Jiangxi, also with 200 birds, and Dongting lake in Hubei with 100 birds, the article says, quoting recent Chinese reports. But the Longgan population is much bigger than any of these and puts the total Chinese wintering population at about 1,000. The highest number seen at Longgan is 407, on 25 December, 1988, according to the article by a Hubei environmental official, Zhao Xuegang. Although the Chinese population is important, the main wintering ground of the Hooded Crane is at Izumi in Japan, where 5,484 were seen in 1983-84. Between 200 and 300 also winter in South Korea, according to *Birds to Watch* by Collar and Andrew (ICBP, 1988).

(Contributed by Michael Rank)

SURVEYS SHOW NEED FOR PROTECTION IN VIETNAM

Surveys undertaken by Vietnam's Forest Birds Working Group and ICBP have again resulted in exciting new discoveries and helped to assess the need to extend the country's network of protected areas.

Of major importance was the sighting of three displaying White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni* in Nam Bai Cat Tien National Park. The only other recent records of this little known and enigmatic species are from Kalimantan in Indonesia. It is now probably extinct in Thailand and there are no recent records from Laos or Cambodia. Last year the team also recorded White-winged Duck *Cairina scutulata* here and their discoveries underlines the international importance of these wetlands.

Unfortunately, fishermen living within the park are disturbing the area which is tending to conflict with park staff. Earlier in the year these tensions exploded and a park guard and a fisherman were killed. Park authorities have now decided that several thousand villagers living within the park will have to move. Although this will not be easy they believe it is the only way the integrity of the wetlands at Nam Bai Cat Tien can be maintained.

Exploring Mount Bi Doup for the first time the team discovered an undescribed fulvetta *Alcippe* (see recent reports on page 50 for more information). This mountain in the Da Lat Highlands in southern Vietnam was also found to hold Crested Argus *Rheinartia ocellata*; a record which represents a significant southern extension to the known range of the species in Vietnam. A search for the endemic Grey-crowned Crocias *Crocias langbianus* yielded no result, but this area is obviously of great interest to ornithologists.

Surveys were also carried out in other highland forests in the Da Lat Highlands. The evergreen forests in this massif are the major centre of avian diversity in Indo-china. The area contains no fewer than four endemic species and perhaps 42 endemic subspecies of bird. Unfortunately, the distribution of these birds is little known and no protection has yet been proposed for the area. The team found the endemic Black-hooded Laughingthrush *Garrulax milleti* and Pale-capped Pigeon *Columba punicea*;

although the latter has a wide distribution in Asia there have been very few recent records anywhere within its range.

Despite these interesting finds, the outlook for Edwards's Pheasant *Lophura edwardsi* was not so encouraging. During a two week survey the team were unable to find any suitable forest and it seems likely the species has become extinct in the southern part of its former range.

Bach Ma National Park was visited and the team were alarmed to find that uncontrolled and intensive cutting of rattans, which are exported for furniture production was going on. The small and under-funded park staff is powerless to stop this unsustainable exploitation without the support of the provincial forest department.

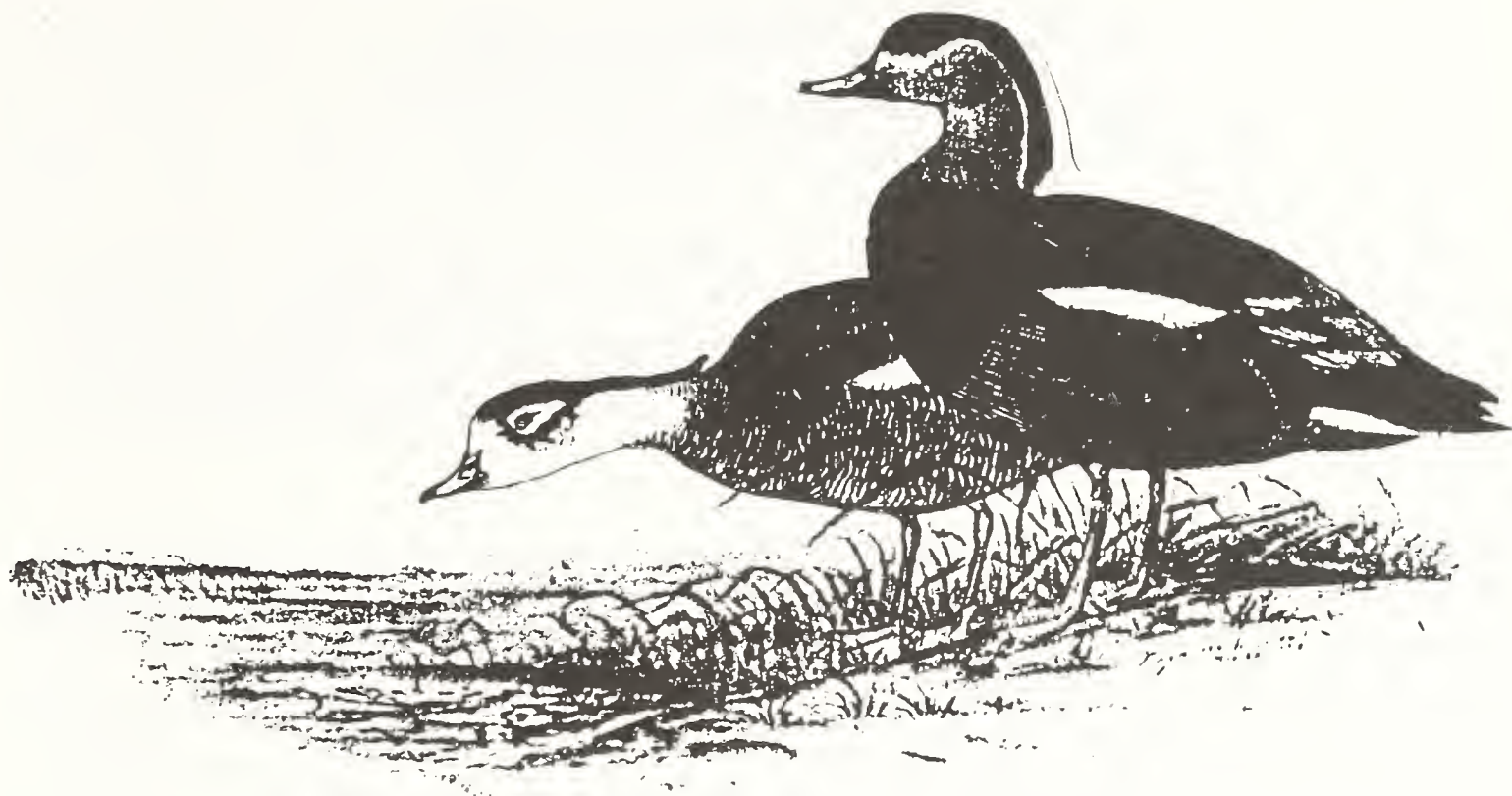
Dr Nguyen Cu and Truong Van La of the Forest Birds Working Group were joined by Jonathan Eames and Craig Robson of ICBP for the survey work which was partly funded by an OBC survey grant. Without a greater commitment to further support for its protected area programme, Vietnam will irrevocably lose the very basis for conserving its biodiversity.

'EXTINCT' SHELDUCK REDISCOVERED IN CHINA?

Hopes are rising that the Crested Shelduck *Tadorna cristata*, long feared extinct, has been rediscovered in a remote region of south-west China. A report in a Chinese natural history magazine suggesting that this beautiful bird survives in the mountains of Yunnan Province is especially exciting because it is an extremely poorly known species, with only a handful of sightings ever recorded. The magazine *Da Ziran* (Nature) has reported that birds answering the Crested Shelduck's description have been discovered near the town of Zhaotong, and although the identification is not certain, the report is arousing considerable interest amongst ornithologists.

There have only been three records of the Crested Shelduck in the past 50 years, the most recent report dating back to March 1971 when it was sighted in North Korea. It has hardly helped that the main hope for the species' survival lay in the ultra-sensitive Chinese-Russian-North Korean border area, which has long been closed to outsiders and where birdwatching is for all practical purposes banned. But hope was not completely abandoned, and ornithologists in China, Russia, Japan and North and South Korea have in recent years launched a hunt to bring this bird back from the dead.

At last the search seems to have borne fruit. A group of environmental officials from Zhaotong believe up to 20 Crested Shelduck may survive near a remote reservoir over 3,000 metres above sea level. Local peasants say they have seen ducks closely matching pictures of the Crested Shelduck, noted for the slight "mane" on its neck, white wing patch, reddish bill and feet, and a "spectacled" face on the female which has a prominent white patch around the eye. "It's certainly the duck in the picture", one peasant is quoted as saying. The officials searched for the birds themselves, and last December caught sight through their telescope of ducks swimming in the reservoir which could well have been Crested Shelducks. They had red beaks and white wing patches, but it was too misty to be certain. 'We believe that according to the clues



Crested Shelduck *Tadorna cristata*

were hard to see, and as the photographs we took were blurred and we were unable to catch any, we cannot confirm this', the officials say in their report.

So far, so tantalising. But it must be a good omen that the area where the birds were seen, known as Dashanbao, has the world's biggest population of the extremely rare Black-necked Crane, estimated at around 700 birds. The cranes were only discovered two years ago, so it is quite possible that Dashanbao, a desolate region largely undisturbed by man, has more surprises up its sleeve.

(Contributed by Michael Rank)

ALTAI SNOWCOCK - FIRST CHINESE RECORD

The little-known Altai Snowcock *Tetraogallus altaicus* has been reported from the Sino-Mongolian border, the first time it has been recorded in China. Two subspecies have been found, in separate though nearby areas. *T. a. altaicus* has been discovered in the Beita Shan mountains north-east of the Xinjiang regional capital Urumqi, while *T. a. orientalis* has been found further north-west around the town of Altai, according to a report in the magazine *Yesheng Dongwu [Chinese Wildlife]* (1991.4). It gives no further information about the Altai Snowcock, though it does give details of a survey of the Tibetan Snowcock *T. tibetanus* and the Himalayan Snowcock *T. himalayensis* in western China and Tibet.

(Contributed by Michael Rank)

On the Trail of the Malaysian Peacock-Pheasant

In this article, Philip McGowan discusses the problems he faced in studying bird behaviour in the tropical forests of Malaysia and outlines how these were overcome during his research into the calling and ranging behaviour of the Malaysian Peacock-Pheasant.

The Malaysian Peacock-Pheasant *Polyplectron malacense* is one of six⁴ or seven⁵ species of peacock-pheasant of the genus *Polyplectron*. It is a medium-sized pheasant with adults weighing about 500-650 gms. Males possess a long, metallic blue-green crest, orange facial skin and blue-green ocelli on the mantle and tail⁷ and spurs, most commonly two per leg. The spurs, crest and mantle ocelli are absent in the female.

Although it is the most studied member of the genus, this simply reflects the fact that virtually nothing is known about the other species, rather than implying the Malaysian Peacock-Pheasant is particularly well known. The species is very difficult to detect outside periods of calling.

Davison² provides some information on the behaviour of the species in the wild. Most of his sightings (51 of 55) at Pasoh were of single birds, suggesting that the species is solitary. The birds are known to give three types of call which have been described verbally by Medway and Wells⁸ and Davison²; Medway and Wells⁸ indicate that females also emit one of these calls - the clucks. Clearance of display courts or scrapes by male birds is only known from species inhabiting tropical forest¹⁰ and so the presence of this trait in the Malaysian Peacock-Pheasant is of interest. Davison² watched some males cleaning such display scrapes and found that they remove leaf litter from them by bill-raking, foot scraping and flapping their wings. Males call, preen and feed close by these scrapes and a male has been seen displaying to a visiting female at these fixed sites³.

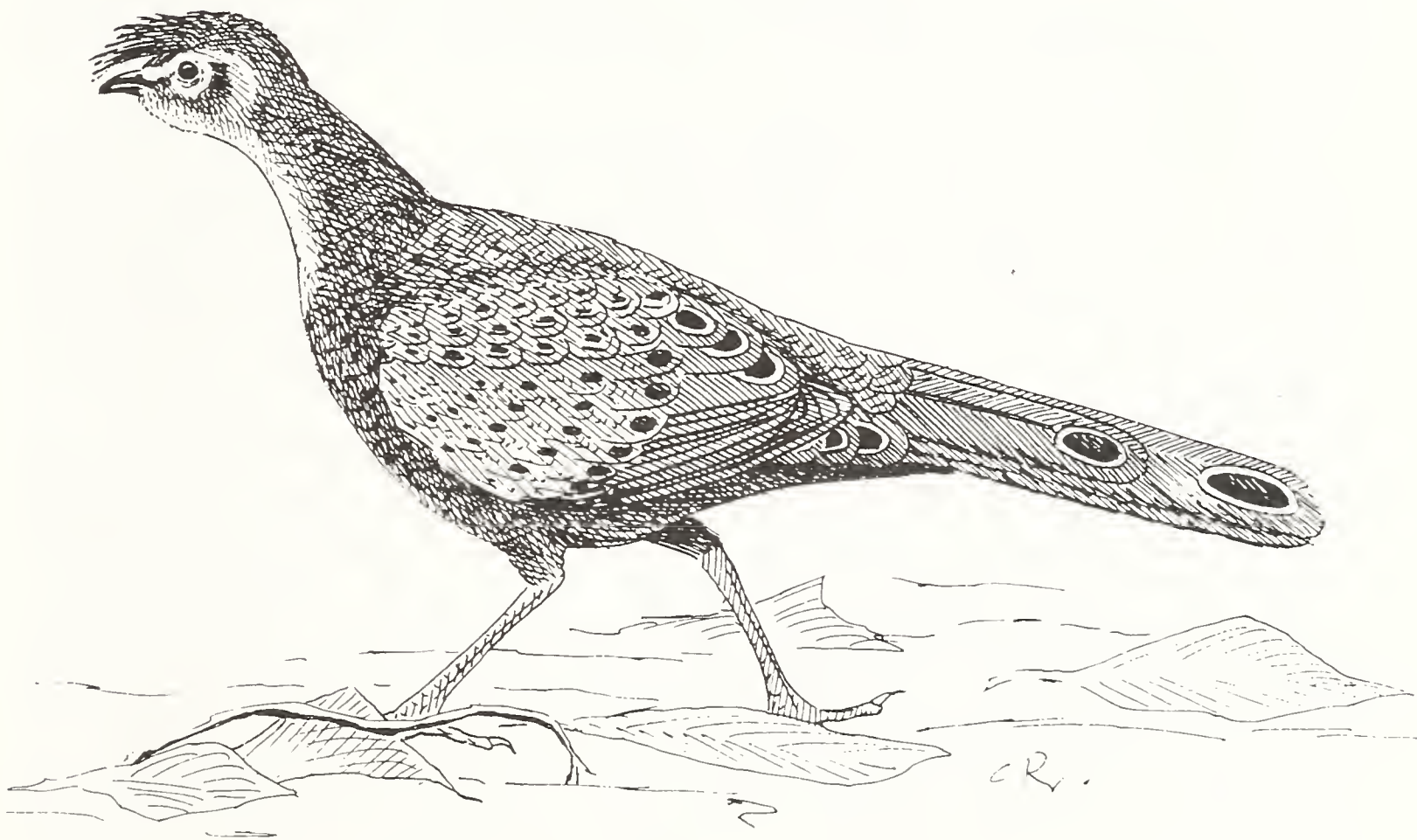
In January 1988 I began a field study of the species designed to further explore aspects of its behaviour, particularly ranging and calling. Most of my work was conducted at Kuala Lompat Ranger Post on the eastern edge of the Krau Wildlife Reserve, Pahang, Peninsular Malaysia between January 1988 and July 1991 (Map 1). The Forest Research Station at Pasoh near Simpong Pertang in Negri Sembilan was also visited regularly in 1989 and 1990.

When studying birds in this type of habitat it is important to recognise that data collection is slow and that it is not possible to study as many ecological and behavioral topics as in other habitats. As a result many South-East Asian tropical forest bird species remain little known. Karr⁶ has listed several reasons why encounter rates of tropical birds are low and believes that the biology of the birds themselves is the biggest obstacle to even simple study of avian communities. Birds' secretiveness,

decreased levels of singing and extensive overlap of home range all make study difficult.

The Malaysian Peacock-Pheasant is no exception to this rule and while some males can be detected by calls during a calling period, not all males call at such times and at other times of the year all individuals are difficult to detect, often enough to make detailed study feasible. Such problems preclude reliable estimates of density. However, I saw radio-tracking as a method by which the species could be encountered more frequently, individuals could be recognised and ranging behaviour outside calling periods studied in some detail.

Only two studies have managed to track the movements of birds in Malaysia's tropical forests and a quick perusal of these studies indicates



Malaysian Peacock-Pheasant *Polyplectron malacense* by Craig Robson

potential problems. Davison¹ tagged two male Great Argus Pheasants *Argusianus argus*, that maintained dancing grounds on hills, and produced daily ranges for them. In addition, he was able to estimate the time the birds spent at the dancing ground, time spent roosting and perching, and time spent walking. Lambert⁸ tracked six fruit-eating birds of three canopy-dwelling species for up to seven days and also produced daily ranges and roost locations. That both of these studies have tracked small numbers of individuals for each species is because of the difficulties involved in catching many tropical forest birds.

To trap the birds for my study I sought the help of the local orang asli (aborigines) who have their own traditional methods. Once trapped I equipped the pheasants with transmitters in a necklace harness. The whole package should be as light as possible and not heavier than 3% of body weight. Within this weight constraint, there is a trade-off between the length of battery life and the distance at which signals can be detected. I opted for long battery life (up to ten months) and short range (up to 230 m). The short range was acceptable as the trails at Lompat are no more than 150 m apart (Map 1), but did mean that at times finding tagged individuals was difficult. Radio-locations were made a minimum of about two hours apart and birds could wander 200 m or more in any direction within that time. Sometimes it took about one and a half hours to locate a tagged bird. Each radio-location was obtained by triangulation from at least three mapped positions and birds had to be approached quite closely to allow reliable bearings to be taken.

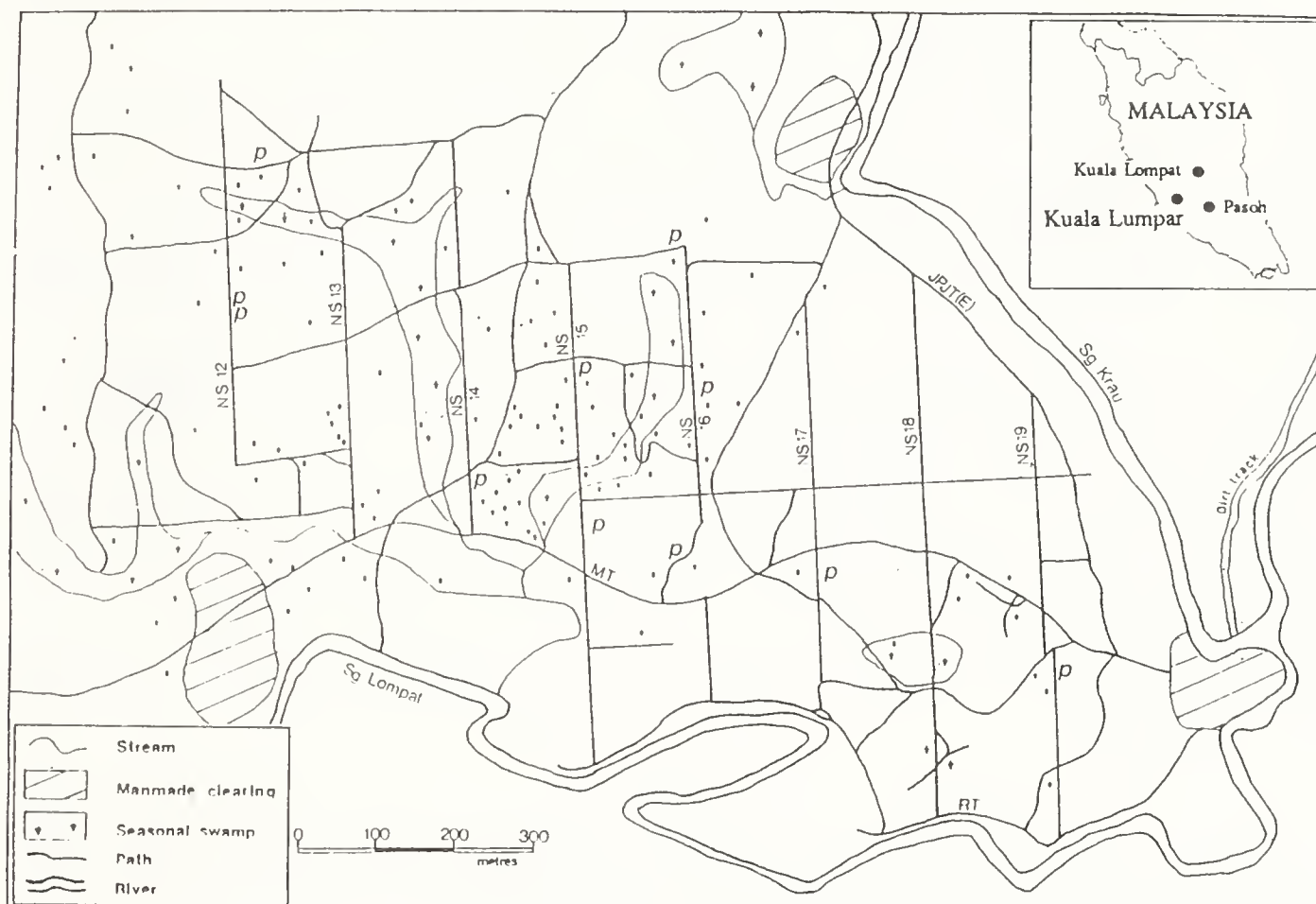
Radio tracking was used to document ranging behaviour outside periods of calling. Five individuals were tracked for periods between one month and ten months. On two separate occasions, a male was tracked at the same time as a female and in both instances, during sampling periods the males used much larger 90% core and total areas. In order to describe the total area used, I had to make more radio-locations for the males than for the females. From these details on range, I suspect that females' ranging behaviour is centred on a core area within a home range, whereas males range more widely and do not necessarily use a core area when there is no calling. I also found a high proportion of overlap between the one male and female that were tracked simultaneously over six months and this suggests that males and females can associate outside the calling periods at least and that individuals are not necessarily solitary.

From survey walks, conducted in a standard way each month, I plotted all peacock pheasant calls. Individuals are silent and difficult to detect for most of the year and calling periods were short and at unpredictable times. From watching calling birds at Zoo Negara and from hearing radio-tagged birds of known sex, I am sure that I can distinguish male and female clucks. The first few notes of the females' call is considerably less emphatic than the 'explosive cackle'⁹ of the male. During periods of calling, a considerable proportion of calls are heard within a small area, indicating that there are 'clumps' of calling males. These 'clumps' have remained in the same area during the same field season, but are not necessarily in the same area in different field seasons. Data from both calling records and trapping/radio-tracking also suggested that there is a part of the study site that is not used at all by peacock pheasants.

During survey walks, I heard all three call types that the species is known to give. There is not any particular daily peak of calling, such as a dawn or dusk chorus, but

'whistles' do seem to be given most often in the first and last hour of daylight. Overall levels of calling are low, which makes investigation of the function(s) of calling rather tedious and slow. From making correlations between calls and the context in which they are given and by conducting playback experiments, I tentatively conclude that there is a hierarchy of calls, based on the condition that the males are in. At the bottom of this hierarchy are the clucks by which the species is most readily detected. These clucks can develop into a call type named *tchorrs* by Davison², which are often heard as a response to calling by another individual. The ultimate Malaysian Peacock-Pheasant call type is the whistle and he who can whistle the most seems to shut up the competition! As such, there is no one territorial call, but I suspect that all three call types convey information to other males and females about the condition of the calling male.

It appears that there is considerable variation among males in their behaviour during these calling periods. This varies from silent, non-scrape maintaining males right through to individuals meticulously cleaning several scrapes and whistling with gusto.



Map 1. Kuala Lompat study site showing trails with numbers and names, and locations of calling records from monthly surveys and the sites where Malaysian Peacock-Pheasants were trapped (P).

The radio-tracking and calling data are currently being analysed and written up. In addition, the assessment of micro-habitat use by the pheasant, now in progress, may well have important repercussions for long term conservation planning.

Acknowledgements

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Bird Trade in Saigon's Cau Mong Market

The best-known centre for the wild bird trade in South-East Asia is probably the Bangkok weekend market held at Chatuchak Park, which recently has been the subject of a survey by members of the Bangkok Bird Club⁵. Nothing, however, has so far been published on bird trade in Saigon. This note documents a short survey on the trade at Cau Mong market in Saigon and compares the findings with the Bangkok survey, speculates on future trends in the market and the implications for conservation.

Cau Mong bird and animal market is located next to the Saigon River in central Saigon. It is a permanent site where wild-caught native birds, mammals and reptiles are sold. During 1991 I paid three visits to the market (14 April, 13 May and 3 July) and recorded all species of bird and mammal in trade. Table 1 gives the data on birds.

In total on the three visits to the market, the 15 stallholders at Cau Mong were offering 9,896 birds of 43 species. In the recent Bangkok Bird Club survey of 59 bird-traders at the Bangkok weekend market, 68,654 native birds of 225 species were recorded on 25 weekends between 19 December 1987 to 11 December 1988⁵. Before comparing these figures the difference in size of the two data sets should be noted.

The Bangkok weekend market had four times the number of vendors than the Cau Mong market in Saigon, but each vendor had on average 46 birds compared to a mean average of 219 birds per stall recorded at Cau Mong market. The mean number of birds recorded per visit was 2,746 in Bangkok and 3,298 at Cau Mong market Saigon. While these figures show that many more stallholders are involved in the Bangkok market, they suggest that in terms of numbers of birds, Saigon's Cau Mong market may be larger. However, without data on turn-over rates it is not possible to draw any conclusions about the volume of birds actually sold.

In Thailand and Vietnam wild birds are bought and kept as cagebirds, for their aesthetic value and for their prowess as songsters. They may also be bought to be released for spiritual reasons or used for culinary purposes. Tables 2 and 3 rank the five most commonly recorded species and their relative proportions in both surveys. In both tables the top five contains a dove, parakeet, starling and a finch, suggesting similar tastes in cagebirds, despite cultural differences between the two nations. The majority (76%) of birds for sale at Cau Mong market were members of the Ploceidae, whereas no single family predominated in the Bangkok weekend market. At Cau Mong market, one species alone, Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata* comprised 59% of all birds for sale but it ranked only third in the Bangkok weekend market survey. The Zebra Dove *Geopelia striata* was the most commonly recorded species during the Bangkok weekend market survey, reflecting its popularity as a cage-bird in Thailand.

Table 1. Birds recorded at Cau Mong market, Saigon

Species	14/4	13/5	03/7
<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	50	75	
<i>Spilornis cheela</i>			2
<i>Accipiter trivirgatus</i>			2
<i>A. badius</i>			1
<i>Pavo muticus</i>	2	2	
<i>Treron vernans</i>			5
<i>Columba punicia</i>			4
<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>		25	40
<i>S. chinensis</i>		60	610
<i>Psittacula sp.</i>		4	
<i>Psittacula roseata</i>	100		
<i>P. alexandri</i>	200	80	120
<i>Loriculus vernalis</i>		4	200
<i>Clamator coromandus</i>	1	1	
<i>Centropus sinensis</i>		2	19
<i>Anthracoseros albirostris</i>		1	
<i>Rhyticeros corrugatus</i>			3
<i>Chloropus aurifrons</i>	1	4	1
<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>			13
<i>P. aurigaster</i>		3	3
<i>P. blanfordi</i>			1
<i>Dicurus paradiseus</i>			1
<i>Crypsirina temia</i>			1
<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>		1	2
<i>Garrulax chinensis</i>	2	2	4
<i>G. canorus</i>	5	8	4
<i>Heterophasaia melanoleuca</i>			1
<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	10	12	9
<i>C. malabaricus</i>		6	11
<i>Saxicola caprata</i>			2
<i>Anthus rufulus</i>		2	2
<i>Sturnus sinensis</i>		5	
<i>S. nigricollis</i>		3	1
<i>Sturnus burmannicus</i>		51	500
<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>		1	2
<i>A. javanicus</i>			1
<i>A. cristatellus</i>		2	1
<i>Gracula religiosa</i>	1	6	12
<i>Zosterops sp.</i>		1	80
<i>Passer montanus</i>		1,200	
<i>Ploceus sp.</i>			30
<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>	10	200	
<i>Amandava amandava</i>	10		20
<i>Lonchura striata</i>		100	40
<i>L. punctulata</i>	3,500	1,500	800
<i>L. malacca</i>	50	25	20
Total	3,942	3,386	2,568

This species does not occur in Vietnam where it is replaced as a popular cagebird by the Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*. As both countries possess large and similar avifaunas it is not surprising that most of the species for sale at Cau Mong market were recorded in the Bangkok weekend market, the exceptions being Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus*, Pale-capped Pigeon *Columba punicea*, Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata*, Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* and Crested Myna *Acridotheres cristatellus*.

In both surveys the majority of species (59% at Cau Mong and 56% in Bangkok) were species generally inhabiting secondary, agricultural and other marginal habitats. The remaining species could be described as forest dependant. During the two surveys only three globally threatened species¹ were recorded; Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus*, found in both surveys, Pale-capped Pigeon, recorded at Cau Mong market, and Plain-pouched Hornbill *Aceros subruficollis*, found in Bangkok.

All the native species recorded at Cau Mong market were resident breeding species in Vietnam, except Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus* which is also a migrant and White-shouldered Starling *Sturnus sinensis* which is a migrant only⁵. According to the stallholders, most birds were obtained in the southern provinces of Vietnam. However, the range of the Hwamei *Garrulax canorus* does not extend south of North Annam⁵ and these birds must therefore have been transported a considerable distance.

Although most of the native birds recorded in the Bangkok survey would certainly have originated in Thailand, a major difference between the two markets was the large number of non-native species for sale in Bangkok; 3,132 exotic birds of 51 species⁵. The only non-native species for sale at Cau Mong market was a single Chattering Lory *Lorius garrulus flavopalliatu*s. This species, endemic to the islands of Bacan and Obi in Indonesia³, was the commonest Lory species at the Bangkok market, where 190 birds were recorded.

It would be difficult to predict future trends in bird trade at Cau Mong market other than to speculate that as economic conditions improve in Vietnam, demand for cagebirds will grow amongst the more affluent sections of the population. As forest cover declines further in Vietnam, the species appearing in trade will inevitably change. The number birds of species already reduced by loss of habitat, including forest dependent species, could be expected to decline. Capture of these species for trade may hasten extinction rates. In the short-term population levels of other species may be depressed as a result of capture for trade. For example Round⁵ has shown that capture for the pet trade may contribute to the decline of even ecologically tolerant species associated with agricultural habitats such as Red-breasted Parakeet *Psittacula alexandri*.

The need to introduce legislation to control the domestic market at this stage is questionable since Cau Mong market is small and relatively few globally threatened or forest dependent bird species are currently traded. In addition, legislation alone is insufficient if the will to enforce the law is lacking as experience in Thailand has shown⁵.

Increasing commercial trade between Vietnam and its neighbours will inevitably lead to an increase in the number of exotic species appearing at Cau Mong market and, in future, overseas markets for Vietnamese bird species may be found. Vietnam is not yet a signatory to CITES² and, although this may have few implications for the bird trade

in Vietnam at present, I have evidence of international trade in reptiles and mammals at Cau Mong market. The signing and ratification of this convention is therefore a logical next step in the development of Vietnam's conservation legislation. In the meantime, continued monitoring of trade at Cau Mong market will provide a useful insight into the bird trade.

Table 2. The five most frequently recorded species at the Bangkok weekend market (after Round 1990)

Species	Number of individuals	% of total BKK	% of total SGN
<i>Geopelia striata</i>	9,394	13.7	0
<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	6,889	10.0	0.10
<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	5,299	7.7	58.60
<i>Psittacula alexandri</i>	4,496	6.5	4.00
<i>Acridotheres javanicus</i>	3,516	5.1	0.01

Table 3. The five most frequently recorded species at Cau Mong market, Saigon

Species	Number of individuals	% of total SGN	% of total BKK
<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	5,800	58.6	7.700
<i>Passer montanus</i>	1,200	12.1	0.007
<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	670	6.7	4.900
<i>Sturnus burmannicus</i>	551	5.5	0.300
<i>Psittacula alexandri</i>	400	4.0	6.500

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Focus on the White-winged Wood Duck

The White-winged Wood Duck is a threatened species and now extinct in much of its former range. In this article the author reports on a forthcoming publication and indicates how Club members can contribute important information by focussing on the White-winged Wood Duck as one of the 'key species' to look out for in South-East Asia.

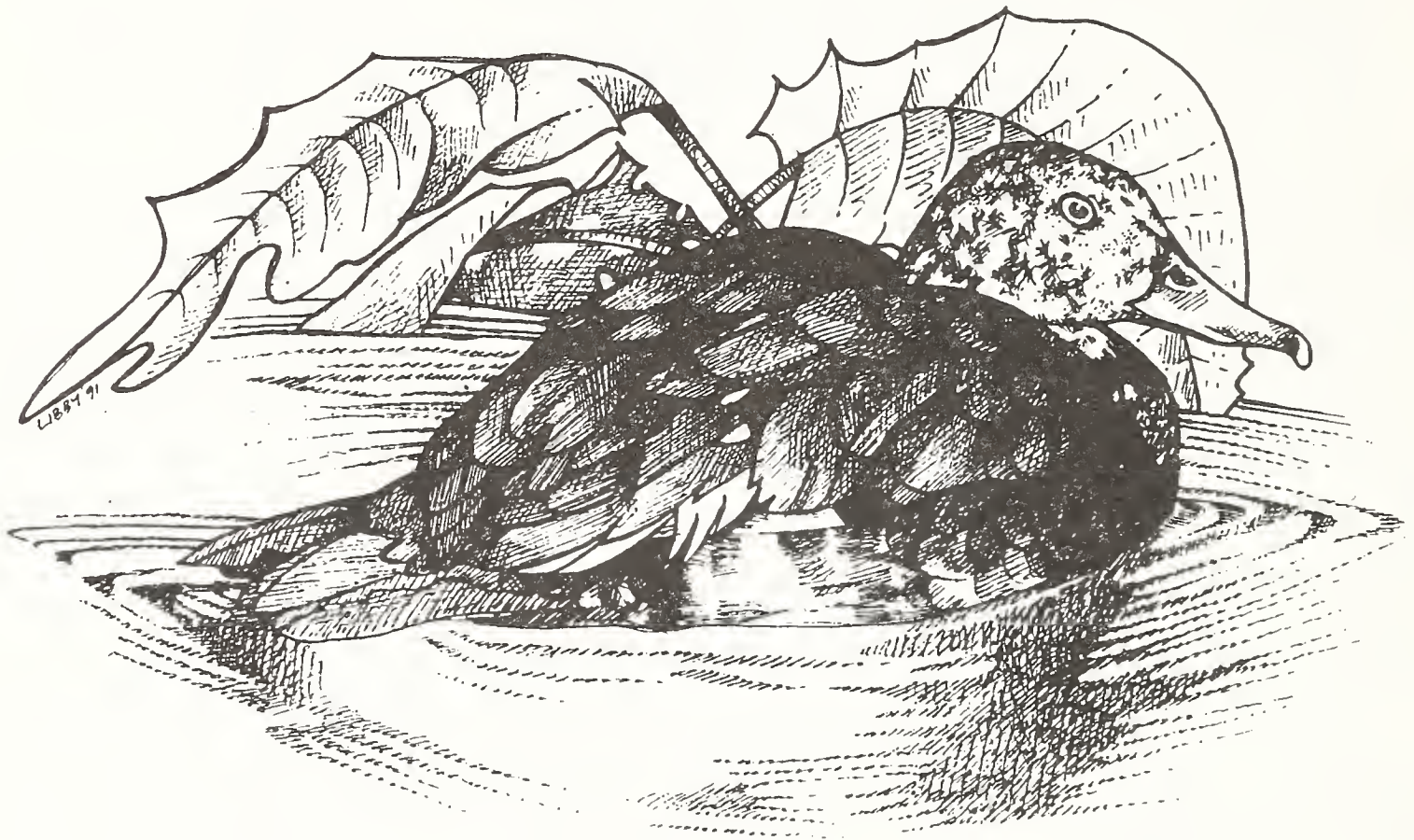
The White-winged Wood Duck *Cairina scutulata* is an unusual waterbird restricted to small wetlands (streams, ponds, swamps) amongst lowland areas of moist or swamp forest in South-East Asia. The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) has recently carried out a study to clarify the status of the White-winged Wood Duck in the wild and the conservation actions necessary to ensure its survival. Asian Wetland Bureau and ICBP have provided assistance with the project. A major review of all current and historic data on the species included a literature search and the collation of information from 50 people in Asia and elsewhere with local expertise and field knowledge of the species. This has enabled WWT to build up a picture of the decline of the species, its habitat needs and ecology, and to draw up a conservation plan for the species.

In the last century, the species was very widespread in South-East Asia with historical records from north-east India (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura), Bangladesh (Chittagong Hills), Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia and Indonesia (Sumatra and Java). It was described as 'common' by early British ornithologists in areas of lowland plains rainforest in India, Myanmar and peninsular Thailand^{1,2,4}. Since then, there has been a drastic decline caused mainly by the devastation of lowland tropical forests. Forest is essential for roosting and breeding, although the species can sometimes survive and breed in degraded or secondary forests. Hunting has also played a major role in the decline in some areas. In one Bangladesh population, 74% of ducklings were taken by hunters².

The White-winged Wood Duck is now thought to be extinct in Malaysia and Java, but the project has identified 40 small, isolated populations surviving in forest patches in India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and Sumatra. Its present status in Laos and Cambodia has yet to be established. In total, the known population is only 200 individuals. This is likely to be an underestimate as their shy, retiring habits make the birds difficult to locate, and future surveys may identify larger or new populations. However, the total world population is probably less than 1,000 and is thought to have

declined by more than 95% this century. Under current IUCN criteria, the species is certainly Endangered and may well be Critical.

The species is in real danger of extinction, as many of the populations will probably be eliminated within a few years by continuing habitat destruction and hunting. Furthermore, most or possibly all remaining populations identified are too small and isolated to be viable in the long term, even though 10 of them occur in protected areas. Hence conservation action is urgently required if the White-winged Wood Duck is to survive in the wild. There is a widespread need for surveys to locate as yet unknown populations and to clarify which of the known ones are largest and of highest priority.



White-winged Wood Duck *Cairina scutulata* by Libby Millington

The WWT wishes to receive all records of the species in order to continue and improve the monitoring of the species that they have established. There must be field research of the bird's ecology, for example to establish what is limiting the populations to their very low density. The limiting factors are likely to vary between locations but probably include the availability of suitable tree holes for nesting, excessive hunting and availability of suitable feeding sites at the height of the dry season when most wetlands have dried up. Most importantly, there is a need for a major improvement in habitat protection for the species. New protected areas are required. In the existing protected areas, problems of illegal logging, poaching and disturbance must be controlled, and habitat needs to be managed in a way beneficial for White-winged Wood Duck as well as for the large mammals that are so often the main focus for attention.

The final report of this project will be available in early 1992. Please write to the address below if you require more information on the project or wish to obtain a copy of the report. Anyone planning to undertake forest bird surveys are particularly encouraged to write for details of sites requiring surveys and of appropriate survey methods.

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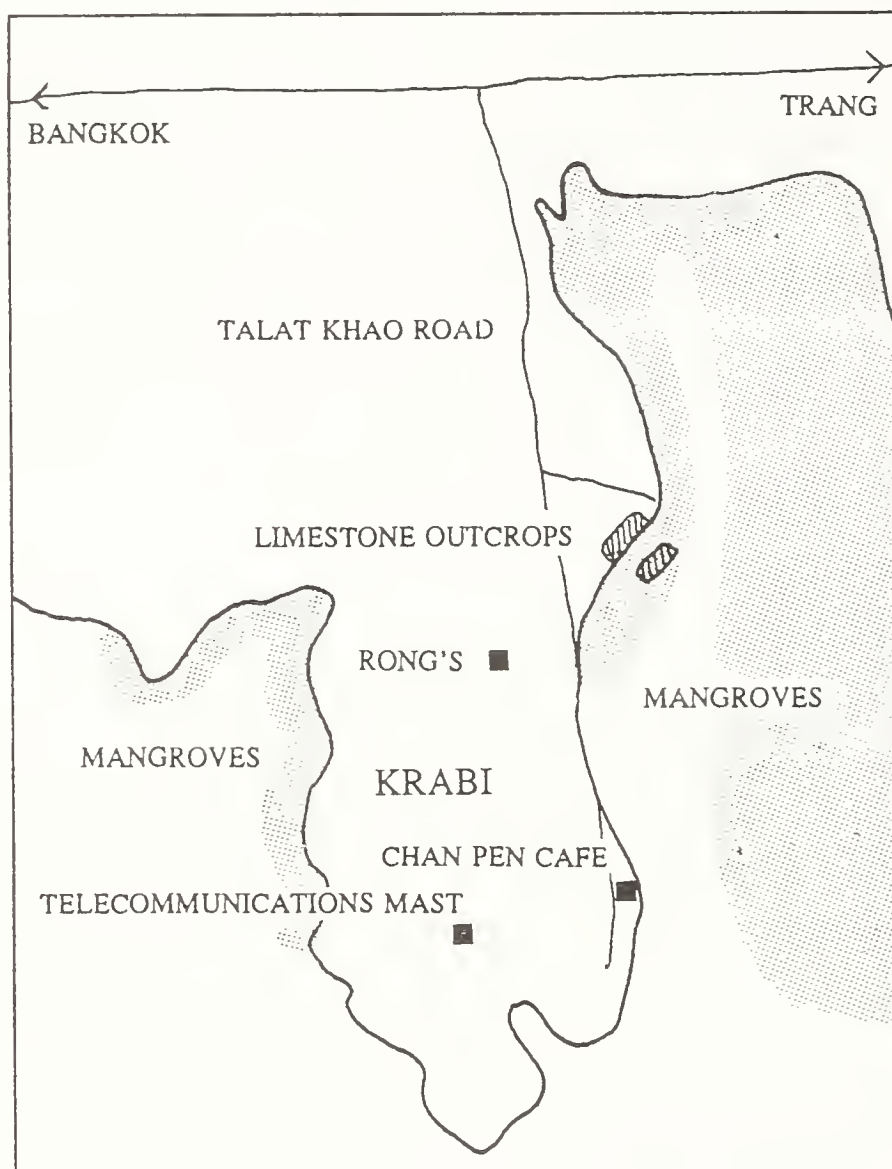




Birdwatching Areas

KRABI, SOUTHERN THAILAND

Krabi offers the opportunity to explore an extensive area of mangroves on Thailand's southern coast, and is close to Khao Nor Chuchi, the site famous for Gurney's Pitta. Mark Cocker describes some of the birds visitors could hope to see and gives some practical tips on where to stay and how to get around.



Since the rediscovery of Gurney's Pitta *Pitta gurneyi* in 1986, the species' only known breeding sites in southern Thailand have been a powerful draw for many birdwatchers. Most of those visiting the region almost inevitably find themselves in the nearby town of Krabi, on the shores of the southern Andaman Sea. This is an excellent base from which to make a trip to Khao Nor Chuchi, the lowland rainforest reserve in which most of the Gurney's Pittas are found. However, Krabi is also a superb site in its own right.

Perhaps most exciting and rewarding of all the opportunities it offers is a chance to see the extensive mangrove forest surrounding the town and its range of birds. The optimum time of year to visit this often inaccessible habitat is from January until September, when some of the specialities, such as Masked Finfoot *Heliopais personata*, Mangrove Pitta *Pitta megarhyneha*, Mangrove Whistler *Pachycephala cinerea*, Mangrove Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis rufigastrea*, White-chested Babbler *Trichastoma rostratum* and Copper-throated Sunbird *Nectarinia calcostetha* are most vocal or easiest to see.

Anyone attempting to enter the mangrove areas on foot is almost inevitably limited by the unfamiliar (and possibly dangerous) tides and creeks and the entangled nature of the vegetation. Despite these restrictions, birdwatching along certain fringe areas can be extremely rewarding. One good site is about two kilometres north of Krabi on the main access road to the town of Talat Khao. Almost directly opposite a large radio disc, visible on the east side of the road, a dirt track runs eastwards to a pair of tall limestone outcrops and an area of mangrove. Mangrove Pittas are regularly seen here, as are Copper-throated Sunbird, White-chested Babbler, Ashy Tailorbird *Orthotomus ruficeps*, Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* (migrant), Yellow-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus goaivier*, Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*, Olive-winged Bulbul *P. plumosus*, and Black and Red Broadbill *Cymbirhynchus macrorhynchus*. The limestone outcrops provide breeding habitat for Edible-nest Swiftlet *Aerodramus fuciphagus*, Dusky Crag-Martin *Hirundo concolor* and the impressive peninsula subspecies of Striated Swallow *Hirundo striolata bardia*. The sleek Oriental Hobby



Mangrove Pitta *Pitta megarhyneha* by Craig Robson

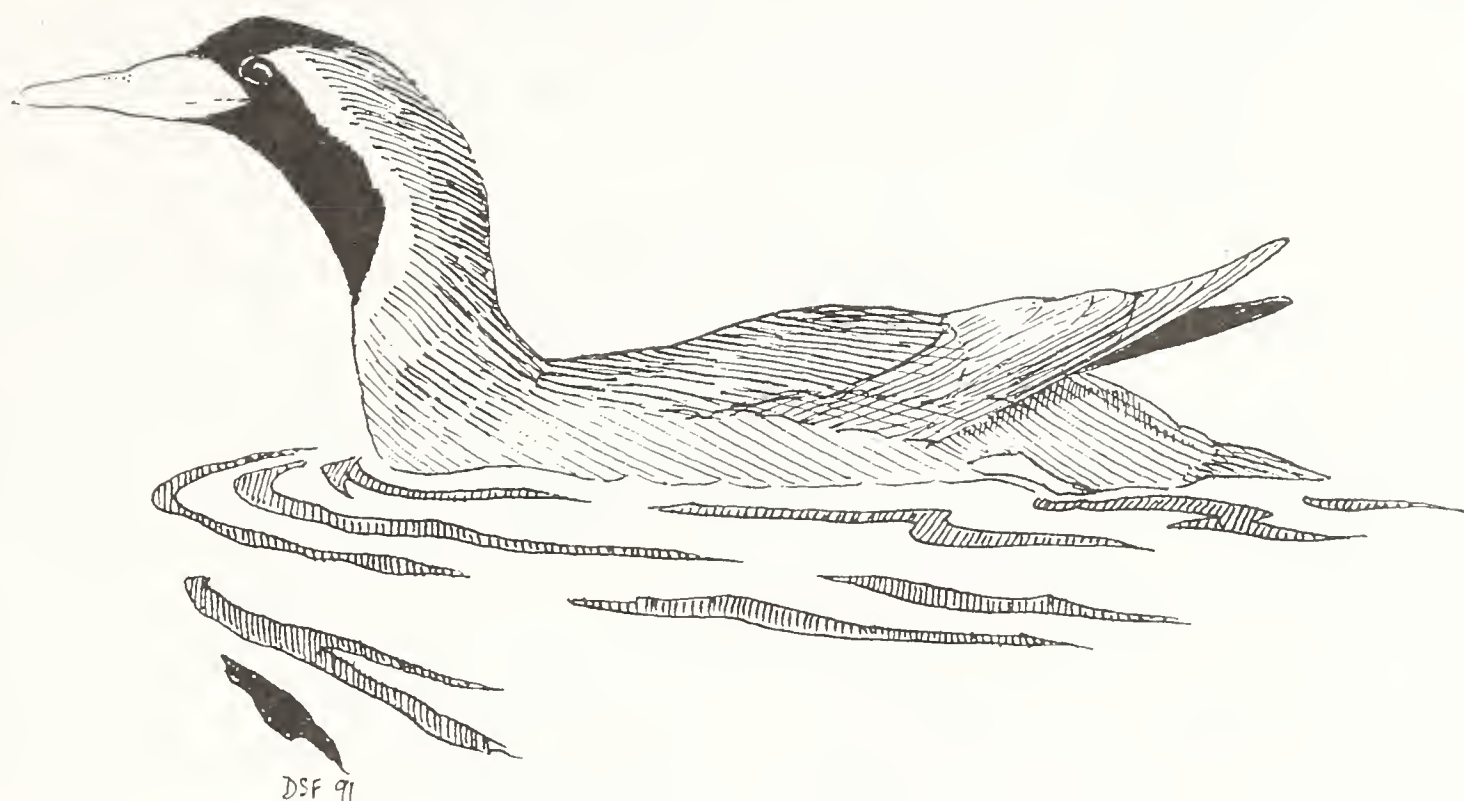
Falco sevenus is occasionally seen here as well as elsewhere around Krabi. At this site and, in fact, in the entire vicinity of Krabi it is usual to see White-bellied Sea-eagles *Haliaeetus leucogaster* and Brahminy Kites *Haliastur indus* circling overhead.

Another area of mangrove accessible on foot is just outside Krabi, and can be reached by heading south-west towards a prominent telecommunications mast. There is some secondary forest en route, while the mangrove itself lies to the west of the mast. This site also holds Mangrove Pitta and is one of the more reliable spots to find Mangrove Whistler and Flyeater *Gerycone sulphurea*, as well as Pink-necked Pigeon *Treron vernans*, Peaceful Dove *Geopelia striata*, Banded Bay Cuckoo *Cacomantis sonnerarii*, Copper-throated Sunbird and Plain-backed Sparrow *Passer flaveolus*.

However rewarding this land-based exploration of the mangroves, it cannot compare with a boat journey into the heart of a large complex of tidal channels and creeks just north-east of the town. Boat hire has to be arranged the day before, and most birdwatchers currently use the services of Mr Dai, a local boat-owner. Hire costs about 100 baht per hour, the boat space limited to 5 or 6. This very moderate fee also earns you Mr Dai's deep knowledge of the mangroves, his awareness of which species most birdwatchers would like to see, such as Masked Finfoot, Ruddy Kingfishers *H. corananda*, Mangrove Pitta, Mangrove Blue Flycatcher and Mangrove Whistler, and where these birds are most likely to be found. After reaching the optimum mangrove areas he kills the engine and moves the boat by paddle with the minimum of disturbance, always stopping it for exactly as long as you require. While his knowledge of languages other than Thai is limited he has a large and expressive range of hand signals, and his Zeiss-quality eyesight ensures that most of the birds are spotted by him.

As in all Asian-forest birdwatching, quiet periods alternate with spells of intense bird activity. The kingfishers, however, are a constant pleasure. There are at least seven regular species at Krabi, including Brown-winged *Pelargopsis amauroptera*, Ruddy *Halycon coromanda*, Black-capped *H. pileata* (passage) and Collared *H. chloris*. In addition to almost all the species mentioned earlier one can see Chestnut-bellied Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus sumatranus*, Grey-rumped Treeswift *Hemiprocne longipennis*, Rufous Woodpecker *Micropternus brachyurus*, as well as Streak-breasted *Picus viridianus*, Great Slaty *Mulleripicus pulverulentus*, White-bellied *Dryocopus javensis*, Grey-Capped *Picoides canicapillus*, and Maroon *Blythipicus rubiginosus* Woodpeckers. The mangrove is also an excellent place to see mammals, with Crab-eating Macaque *Macaca fascicularis*, Dusky Langur *Presbytis obscura*, Itupaia Squirrel *Callosciurus caniceps*, Small-clawed Otter *Aonyx cinerea* and Smooth Otter *Lutra perspicillata*.

Krabi's increased popularity amongst birdwatchers had led to the establishment of a well-oiled infrastructure catering specifically for their requirements. A small inexpensive guesthouse, called 'Rong's', for instance, just north of the town centre, holds an ornithological log-book, enabling visitors to find out about most recent sightings in the Krabi area. Rong, the guesthouse owner and a local schoolteacher, maintains a friendly and highly informal regime and is himself interested in birds. His cousin, Mrs Lee, based at the Chan Pen Café on the sea-front in Krabi, runs a travel agents and arranges not only the mangrove excursions with Mr Dai, but boat-trips out to the two Phi Phi islands about 40 km offshore.



Masked Finfoot *Heliopais personata* by Dave Farrow

Boats can also be hired out to the mudflats east of Ko Nok 4 km south of Krabi where numbers of wintering and migrant shorebirds congregate to feed. A number of Nordmann's Greenshanks *Tringa guttifer* were found wintering here during 1990/91 and the site shows a lot of potential. Regular shorebirds and other coastal species include Pacific Reef-Egret *Egretta sacra*, Mongolian Plover *Charadrius mongolus*, Greater Sand-Plover *C. leschenaultii*, Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* and Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*.

Krabi is not only a great place to birdwatch, it is a wonderful spot to relax. And it would be a disservice not to mention briefly the superb cuisine at the town's Kotung Restaurant, and the swinging chairs on the verandah at 'Rong's'. Perhaps surprisingly, the last is also a good place to see birds, since there is a small marshy pool immediately behind the guesthouse. The list of species seen at this spot includes Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis*, Cinammon Bittern *Ixobrychus eurhythmus*, Lesser Treeduck *Dendrocygna javanica*, Slaty-breasted Rail *Gallirallus striatus*, White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*, Spotted Wood-Owl *Strix seloputo*, Great-eared *Eurostopodus macrotis* and Large-tailed Nightjars *Caprimulgus macrurus*, Pallas' Warbler *Locustella certhiola* and Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus*.

Mark Cocker, 23 Harford Manor Close, Ipswich Road, Norwich, Norfolk, UK.

Little-known Oriental Bird



SILVER ORIOLE

Old World Orioles are all birds of forest or woodland, which feed on insects or fruit. They are well represented in the Oriental Region, where 17 of the 27 species in the genus *Oriolus* (as listed by Sibley and Monroe¹⁰) occur. Several of these are restricted to single islands or island groups in the Philippines and Indonesia, and are vulnerable because of the destruction of their forest habitat. Perhaps the most threatened member of the genus, is a migratory continental species, the Silver Oriole *Oriolus mellianus*.

Originally described as a subspecies of the Maroon Oriole *Oriolus traillii*¹¹, the Silver Oriole is in fact highly distinctive in appearance. The body of the male is silvery-white, contrasting with black head, throat and wings and maroon tail. The female is reminiscent of female Maroon Oriole, but the black head contrasts sharply with the grey mantle, and the underparts are whiter with narrower streaks⁶.

The breeding range of the Silver Oriole runs east to west through the hills of southern China (see Map 1). The type specimen was collected on Longtou Mountain in northern Guangdong Province. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, several more were collected in the Yaoshan range of Guangxi Autonomous Region, where it was described as being very common in the spring, arriving in April¹⁴. Specimens in the British Museum from this locality were collected at altitudes between 300 m and 460 m. Further specimens were collected in northern Kwangtung [= Guangdong Province] in May 1930, at 1,200 m. Other localities listed by Cheng Tso-hsin² are Leibo and Mabian in Sichuan Province.

There are recent records from at least three localities in the breeding range. Up to nine birds were seen in June and July 1987 at Ba Bao Shan, northern Guangdong, in an area of primary forest between 1,200 m and 1,300 m^{4,12}. A female was collected at Libo [= Li-po], Guizhou Province in May 1984 at 500 m¹³. Three birds were seen in May 1986 between 1,200 m and 1,400 m at Huang Nian Shan, Mabian County, Sichuan⁵.

In winter, the Silver Oriole has been recorded in Cambodia and southern Thailand, in evergreen forest up to at least 800 m^{6,7}. Perhaps the best place to look for it is Khao Yai National Park in Thailand, where it occurs regularly around the park headquarters, but is uncommon¹. A pair collected in the Seven Finger range, central Hainan, south-eastern China in November 1906 (specimens in the British Museum) may have been part of a separate wintering population, but could equally have been passage migrants.

The breeding habitat of the Silver Oriole is broadleaved forest up to an altitude of approximately 1,450 m^{2,8}. The available information suggests that it may well be restricted as a breeding bird to primary forest. The lower altitudinal limit of its range

is unclear, but is of academic interest only as almost all of the low altitude broadleaved forest within its known range has been cleared (J. McKinnon *verbally* 1991).

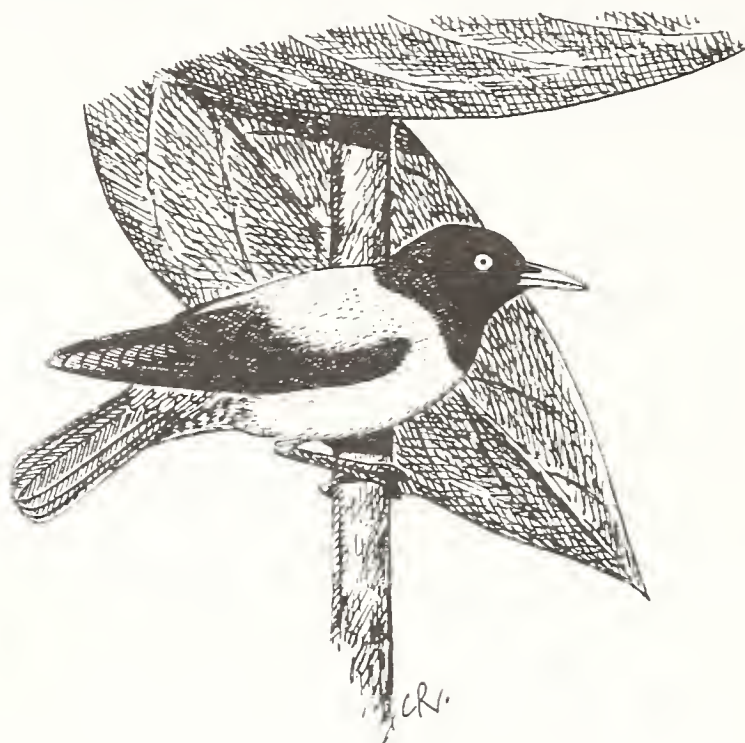
Map 1. Range map of Silver Oriole *Oriolus mellianus*. Breeding localities are individually named. The wintering range is shaded.



The range of the Silver Oriole is remarkably similar to that of another threatened bird, the Golden-fronted Fulvetta *Alcippe variegaticeps*, which is resident in the broadleaved forests of southern Sichuan and the Yaoshan range in Guangxi, at altitudes between approximately 1,000 m and 2,000 m³. In Sichuan, the ranges and habitat requirements of these species overlap with those of the Sichuan Partridge *Arborophila rufipectus*, described by King⁵ as the most threatened galliform in China, and the Omei Shan *Liocichla Liocichla omeiensis*.

It is tempting to suggest that these birds survive in the last remnants of a zone of subtropical broadleaved forest which once stretched across southern China, from Sichuan in the west to Guangdong or beyond in the east. This is one of the most densely populated and intensively cultivated regions of China, and indeed in the world, and much of the forest had already been cleared before the advent of modern

ornithology. Very little of this forest is contained within existing protected areas, and a top priority for conservationists in China must be to locate, survey and protect the surviving patches of this unique habitat.



Silver Oriole *Oriolus mellianus* by Craig Robson

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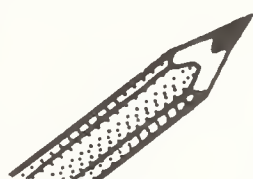
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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Craig Robson, who collected the distributional information used in this article whilst working on the ICBP Biodiversity Project, and to Adrian Long for preparing the map.

Mike Crosby, 21 Great Eastern Street, Cambridge, CB1 3AB, UK.



'To the Editor'

A Supplementary Note on Khar, Pakistan

I was particularly pleased to read in the Bulletin No. 13, the informative and well balanced article on Khar, as it was one of the favourite bird-watching sites of myself and like-minded friends during the early 1980s just after the newly created Hab Dam reservoir became flooded.

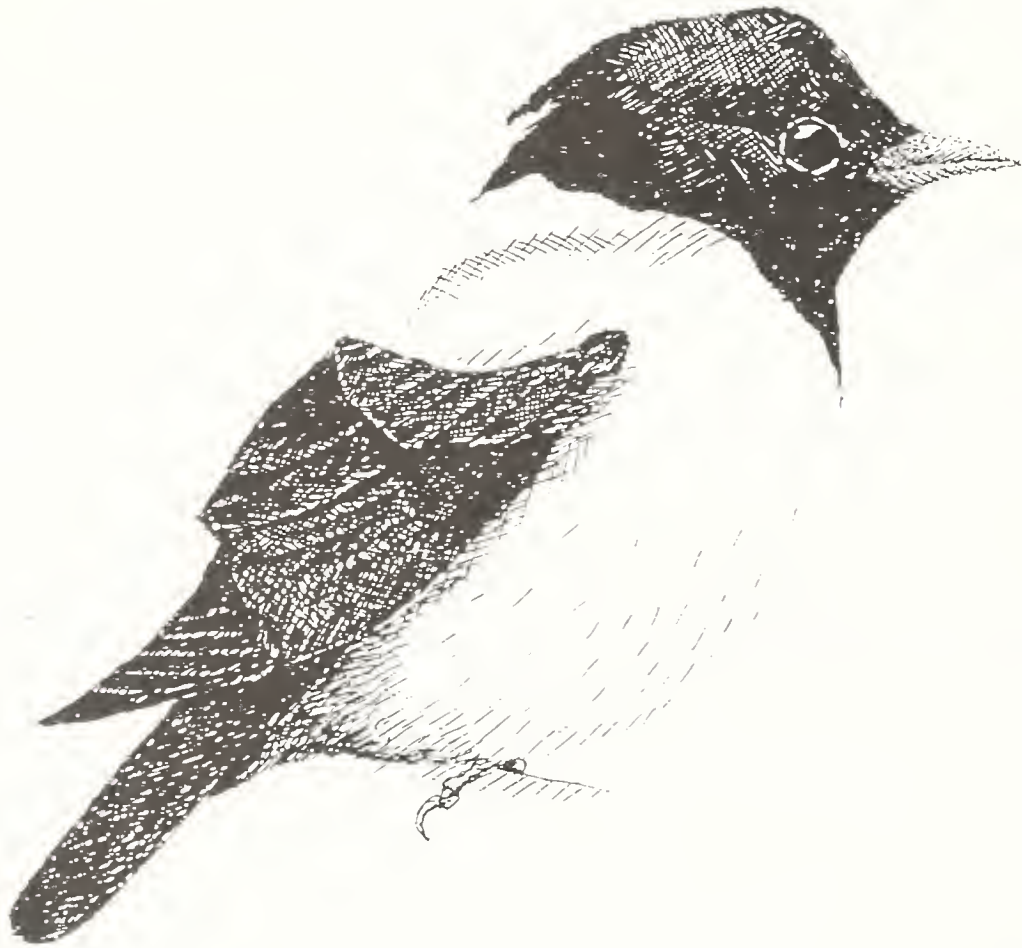
The author of the article, Nigel Lindsey, writes that his visit occurred in October and though his account is remarkably comprehensive, since Khar is fairly easily accessible for anyone staying in Karachi, readers may be interested in supplementary notes as to additional species likely to be encountered in the area during other times of the year.

Firstly a small correction. Hab Dam straddles the border between Baluchistan and Sind provinces as the former Hab River was the boundary. Khar on its eastern flanks is well inside Sind province and the title of the article is incorrect, since Baluchistan Wildlife and Park authorities only have jurisdiction on the western shore of the reservoir. Khar is actually more than 80 km from most parts of Karachi city (not 60 km) and the access road is in places in poor condition but the Sind Wildlife Department if approached properly, will usually provide suitable transport and a guide for reaching the visitors' centre.

The factors which make it of ornithological interest are that the terrain is typical of, and contiguous with most of southern Baluchistan well to the west, and its fauna is quite distinct from that of the Indus flood plain which forms the major region of Sind province. It combines an 'Oasis' (man-made no doubt) in a relatively remote and undisturbed region, thus attracting the shyer migrant waterfowl species, whilst its

surroundings are true arid desert. The average annual rainfall is less than 150 mm (0.59 ins.) and it only experiences humid winds and some rainfall during the short monsoon season from July to early September.

Here is a list of birds found breeding in Khar vicinity (nests or fledglings seen): Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, Black Shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*, Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus*, Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraaetus fasciatus* (known from areas both north and south of Khar, though not in the vicinity), Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera*, (north of Karchat but inside the park), Seesee Partridge *Ammoperdix griseogularis* (with young), Grey Francolin *Francolinus pondicerianus* (with young), Greater Paintedsnipe *Rostratula benghalensis* (in the seepage below the dam), Stone Curlew *Burhinus oedipnemos*, Yellow-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus malabaricus*, Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*, Spotted Owl *Athene brama*, Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*, Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*, Indian Bushlark *Mirafra erythroptera*, Black-crowned Finch-lark *Eremopterix nigriceps*, Ashy-crowned Finch-lark *E. grisea*, Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*, Pale Crag-Martin *Hirundo obsoleta* (in adjacent valley to east),



Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus* by Nigel Lindsey

Common Wood-shrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus*, Himalayan Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucogenys*, Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis*, Rufous-fronted Prinia *Prinia buchanani*, Common Babbler *Turdoides caudatus*, White-throated Munia *Lonchura malabarica*, Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus*, and Great Grey Shrike *L. excubitor*.

The above is a very incomplete list of species which undoubtedly breed in the area as I and my friends never spent much time actually looking for nests. But, based upon my knowledge of birds resident in that area and actually found breeding in an exactly

similar habitat, the following can be added: Cream-coloured Courser *Cursorius cursor*, Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*, Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* (not *S. saundersi* which nests on the Hab river mouth), Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse *Pterocles lichtensteinii*, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *P. exustus*, Rock Dove *Columba livia*, Northern Eagle-Owl *Bubo bubo*, European Nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* (summer visitor), Little Swift *Apus affinis*, White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*, Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, Blue-cheeked Bee-eater *Merops superciliosus* (summer visitor), Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*, Sind Woodpecker *Picoides assimilis*, Greater Hoopoe-Lark *Alaemon alaudipes* (breeds in the park further north), Long-billed Pipit *Anthus similis* (on surrounding higher hills), Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*, Indian Chat *Saxicoloides fulicata* (very common), Striated Prinia *Prinia criniger* (only on surrounding higher hills), Streaked Scrub-Warbler *Scotocerca inquieta* (only on surrounding higher hills), Yellow-throated Sparrow *Petronia xanthocollis* (summer visitor), Trumpeter Finch *Rhodopechys githaginea*, and House Bunting *Emberiza striolata*.

Among the more interesting winter visitors not mentioned in Lindsey's summary: Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* (usually while on spring or autumn migration), Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo vulpinus*, Laggar Falcon *Falco jugger*, Barbary Falcon *F. pelegrinoides*, Sociable Plover *Vanellus gregarius* (now very rare throughout the sub-continent), Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina* (not uncommon), Desert Wheatear *O. deserti* (not uncommon), Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos* (once only but seen over a one week period by three reliable observers) and Spanish Sparrow *Passer hispaniolensis*.

In late summer there is usually a strong passage of Rose-coloured Starlings *Sturnus roseus* and Black-headed Buntings *Emberiza melanocephala* and we have seen Alpine Swifts *Apus melba*, Red-rumped Swallows *Hirundo daurica*, and of all unexpected birds, a party of Fire-capped Tits *Cephalopyrus flammiceps*. On the north-west corner upstream of the reservoir there is often a winter roost of Cinereous Vultures *Aegypius monachus* and it is near this region that a pair of Stone Curlews used to breed.

The record of Red-necked Grebes *Podiceps grisegena* wintering on the Hab Reservoir raises doubts in my mind, as up to 1989 I only knew of three authentic sightings, all in the northern Punjab but I am only adding this comment based upon personal experience. The wintering population of Black-necked Grebes *Podiceps nigricollis* (rare in India) is certainly one of the impressive sights at Khar.

Perhaps it would be true to say that for various political and economic reasons not so many foreigners visit Pakistan nowadays, but the more visitors showing an interest in visiting Kirthar National Park, the more chance of the financial directorates concerned being willing to allocate funds for the maintenance and preservation of areas like Khar. For this reason alone, Nigel Lindsey has done a good service in highlighting this particular corner of the region.

T. J. Roberts, 'Cae Gors', Rhoscefnhir, Near Pentraeth, Anglesey, Gwynedd, LL75 8YU, UK.



Reviews....Reviews

Boonsong Lekagul & Round, P. D. 1991. **A guide to the birds of Thailand.** 135 colour plates, 458 pp. Saha Karn Bhaet Co. Ltd. £30.00

This is more than a new edition of Dr. Boonsong's *Bird Guide of Thailand* (1968, 1974), a fact which Ben King remarks on in his foreword which is eloquent about the problems that faced us before such books existed. This is a completely new book and is also extremely good. It is larger in format than its predecessors and it benefits from high quality paintings of every species.

The use of colour in the new, larger range maps and the well tested texts brings us up to date on the ranges of residents and the status of visitors. Much excellent and very often new information on habitat, abundance, and seasonal occurrence is included and is clearly based on recent careful work. The care is carried through to the presentation of this attractive book. So good are the illustrations, for example Mongkol's waders and Kamol's pipits, that I have gone back to my field notes and finally accepted my own record, long 'square-bracketed', of Nordmann's Greenshank.

The introductory sections have very helpfully been enlarged. However, the single map now provided, although good at showing what it seeks to show, omits major town names. The 1968 work had one map with province boundaries superimposed upon a vegetation map; in 1974, we were treated to a vegetation map without such boundaries and a separate outline map showing rivers, towns and national park names.

Although numbers of birds have clearly declined in the last 30 years, it has become increasingly evident how rich Thailand is in bird species. The checklist by Deignan (1963) listed 790 species; Boonsong (1968) listed 828; Boonsong and Cronin (1974) 849; and Boonsong and Round now list 915, plus three additions in the appendix on page 407; and there are reportedly two more since then.

It would be valuable, in the absence of an updated checklist, if an article were published summarising the 'first records' for Thailand since Deignan (1963), as the more recent books do not cite the relevant first publications. In this respect Boonsong and Round unfortunately follow the example of Deignan who omitted such citations, and, I suppose, of King and Dickinson (1975) whose planned distribution table, in which we intended to give the sources of the 'new distribution records', has not been published.

Most, perhaps all, of the species added to the Thai list have already been published. Sometimes this has been in European publications, and often in *Thai Conservation News*, the *Natural History Bulletin of the Siam Society* or the *Bangkok Bird Club Bulletin*. With this dispersal it is easy both for Thais and others to miss out on reports of new species. Publication has often been tentative and with limited details, and some species so published have later been rejected or at least, as in this new book, treated as

unconfirmed. My point is that it is difficult to keep up to date with new Thai records because, as far as I know, the *Nat. Hist. Bull. Siam Soc.* which once tried to pull all such records together in its Recent Literature section, no longer does so, and there seems to be no other single publication which does.

I hope the Bangkok Bird Club will now set itself the challenge of creating and maintaining a regularly updated checklist like the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Hong Kong* using Boonsong and Round's species numbers as the starting point.

Included in the 915 species listed in the book, is a rediscovered old record of *Mycteria cinerea*. In this vein I should record in passing that David Wells tells me that there are valid specimens of the Western Marsh Harrier from Central Thailand in the British Museum of Natural History; the authors, like King and Dickinson (1975), believe (p.410) that its occurrence is unproven.

Most disallowed records are covered in pp. 409-413 with the probable exception of Round (1983, *Nat. Hist. Bull. Siam Soc.* 31:135) recorded *Cettia fortipes* from NW Thailand; this record seems to have been erroneous; perhaps it was the very similar *C. flavolivacea*.

All this growth in our knowledge is due to a very great increase in birdwatching in Thailand by Thai residents and visitors. This is perhaps best reflected by the new range maps, which are often much more helpful than the bald regional listings used by King and Dickinson (1975).

The authors have modified the sequential listings of species in King and Dickinson (1975) to facilitate field use. In general this is successful. Their most daring innovation is to cover the swifts next to the swallows and therefore notionally within the passerines. English names used depart occasionally from King and Dickinson (1975), and do so sensibly.

A few comments on taxonomic treatments are perhaps in order. I have tried to omit simple usage of different generic names. At the specific level, most of the changes appear to follow those of other authors over the last 15-20 years; a number are connected with the appearance of Vol. XI of Peters' Checklist.

Like many, Boonsong and Round treat *Pluvialis fulva* as a full species. They revert to treating *Arborophila chloropus* and *A. charltonii* as two species again; and they do the same with *Esacus magnirostris* and *E. recurvirostris* (of which my own unpublished record from inside the shoreline at Bang Poo, Samut Prakan, is not mapped). *Cacomantis sepulcralis* is treated as a separate species from *C. variolosus*. The name *Chrysococcyx minutillus* is used for (Thai) *C. malayanus*. *Otus sunia* is separated from *O. scops*, and *Otus lempiji* from *O. bakkamoena*. *Batrachostomus affinis*, which is given specific status in Boonsong and Cronin (1974) and in King and Dickinson (1975), falls into the synonymy of *B. javensis*. *Ceyx rufidorsus* is considered a form of *C. erithacus*. *Pelargopsis* is submerged into *Halcyon*, but *Actenoides* is separated from it. *Rhyticeros subruficollis* is separated from *R. plicatus*. *Anthracoceros convexus* is lumped with *A. albirostris*. *Pitta megarhyncha* is separated from *P. moluccensis*. *Coracina macei*, is separated from *C. novaehollandiae*. *Stachyris ambigua* is lumped with *S. rufifrons*. *Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus* is separated from *P. trochiloides*, but, contrary to recent authors, *P. subaffinis* is maintained as a species separate from *P. affinis*. *Cettia canturians* is kept separate from *C. diphone*. *Orthotomus sepium*

replaces *O. ruficeps* and *Muscicapa daurica* replaces *M. latirostris*. *Pachycephala grisola* is adopted in place of *P. cineria* and *Aethopyga temminckii* is separated from *A. mysticalis* of Java.

This is a book that should without question be owned by everyone who has watched birds or will birdwatch in Thailand.

Edward C. Dickinson.

Roberts, T.J. 1991. The Birds of Pakistan. Volume 1. Regional studies and non-passeriformes. pp. 598; xli; 23 plates (15 colour); line drawings. Oxford University Press, Karachi. £40.

Lying at the western edge of the Oriental region, with vast areas of arid or semi-arid land, Pakistan has been relatively neglected by ornithologists. It may lack any fully endemic bird species, but the wide geographical and altitudinal range, from subtropical coasts of the Arabian Sea, to Karakoram summits exceeding 8,000 metres, ensures an interesting and diverse avifauna. This is the first work to deal with the birds of Pakistan as an individual entity, and is a welcome addition to the ornithological literature of the South Asian subcontinent. A second volume, covering the passerines, is due to be published in February 1992.

The book begins with a checklist of the species included in the volume. A comprehensive introductory section includes a physical description of Pakistan and its climate; a detailed account of habitat types; zoogeographic aspects of bird distribution; migration in Pakistan; the problems inherent in the species concept; the contribution of early ornithologists; and the role of birds as pests or beneficial agents. There are glossaries of vernacular and technical terms, a 12 page bibliography, and a gazetteer. The plates include maps of Pakistan showing localities, physical features, climate and vegetation zones; photographs of habitat types (some of which are not very well reproduced), and colour and black and white illustrations. 153 species are illustrated in the plates, and there are 68 line drawings, all painted or drawn by the author himself.

Volume 1 describes 347 species of non-passerines (out of a total list of 660 species), and the species accounts take up almost 90% of the book. For each species, information is provided on description, habitat, distribution (with map), status, habits, breeding biology and vocalisations. The voice descriptions are based on the author's own recordings of almost half the total species. Most summaries of habitat, distribution and status are also based on the author's own notes, made between 1964-1986. Short accounts are provided of 27 species listed by earlier authors, but excluded from this checklist, and potential additions are also mentioned. The author follows the (as yet unpublished) OBC list of English names, and Voous's order of species as far as possible, referring to alternative names where appropriate.

Pakistan faces the same problems of population growth, demand for improved standards of living and increased pressure on the environment as most Asian countries,

so it is heartening to see that only one bird in this volume, the Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*, is regarded as recently extinct in Pakistan, and that some species, including the near-endemic Sind Woodpecker *Dendrocpus assimilis*, have become more common.

The author modestly claims to be an amateur, which may be true in a strict sense, but there is nothing amateur about this book, which is thorough, detailed and authoritative: a work any professional would be proud of. It is a large format book, not intended in any way as a field guide, but it is an indispensable reference and essential addition to the library of anyone with a serious interest in the birds of the subcontinent.

David P. Mallon

Brazil, M. A., illustrated by Yobuuchi, M. 1991. **The Birds of Japan.** 464 pp; 6 colour plates, 65 Black and White illustrations, 578 distribution maps and 1 map of Japan. Christopher Helm, London. £35.00.

A comprehensive review of Japanese birds was long overdue, but thanks to the author's great efforts, readers now have easy access to information on the status and distribution of all Japanese birds from 1700 to the present day.

The extensive bibliography is very useful for non-Japanese readers (and even for Japanese). Quite a few pages are dedicated to endemic and near-endemic species, and all endemics are illustrated in colour by Mr Yobuuchi, a leading Japanese bird artist. Over the last ten years, the author has spent some considerable time researching birds in Japan and through personal observations and information from friends and colleagues he has been able to accumulate extensive data relating to rare species.

The book includes a brief and useful introduction to the Japanese avifauna and a review of all Japanese birds. The two most important appendices are the 598 distribution maps and the bibliography covering 1,286 Japanese and English references. The maps are quite small, and for those interested in more detailed ones I would recommend consulting *The Atlas of Breeding Bird of Japan* (Kankyochō 1981), and *The Atlas of Wintering Birds in Japan* (Kankyochō 1988), both in Japanese.

Despite the author's in-depth research of Japanese references, there are some interesting omissions. For example, the account for Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor* mentions that 'it is very uncommon resident of boreal deciduous and mixed lowland woods in northern and eastern Hokkaido (not on any offshore islands)'. This species was recorded on the island of Tobishima, in the Japan Sea in 1983 and this record appeared in the magazine of the Wild Bird Society of Japan.

I hope that the author will be able to continue his research and up-date all the information for a future edition.

Shunji Usui

Collins, N. M., Sayer, J. A. & Whitmore, T. C. (eds). 1991. **The Conservation Atlas of Tropical Forests: Asia and the Pacific**. 256 pp; Macmillan Press, London & Basingstoke. £65.00.

This is the first book in a series which will describe the status of the world's tropical forests. This volume attempts to bring together information from a variety of recent sources in order to map and document remaining tropical rain and monsoon forests in the Asia-Pacific region.

The first part of the book consists of eleven short chapters covering issues relevant to the conservation and management of tropical forests in the region. The reader is introduced to the wildlife and indigenous peoples, man's uses of and impact on tropical forests, and a description of the protected areas system and the Tropical Forest Action Plan.

The last of these chapters documents the gloomy picture which emerges of the extent of remaining forests. We are warned that, in the future, timber plantations are likely to replace the large areas of sustainably managed Production Forests on which many conservationists now increasingly lay some of their hopes for the preservation of viable populations of many species of threatened plants and animals.

The second part of the book is a series of 29 succinct surveys, covering each country of the region and including detailed maps. Most maps are based on data from the late 1980's, but those of Sarawak, Cambodia and China are more than ten years old, so that their maps represent a very optimistic view. The maps are well-produced, mostly at scales of 1:3,000,000 or 1:4,000,000, and show the extent of remaining lowland, montane, inland swamp and mangrove rainforest and monsoon forest. Superimposed are both existing and proposed conservation areas of 50 km² or larger. All these categories are readily identified through the use of a sensible colour scheme.

On the maps of Burma, Laos and the Philippines those areas of forests which are degraded are distinguished: it would have been of interest to incorporate this distinction on every map, but presumably this information is not available. Some of the maps are rather depressing. That of the Philippines, for example, shows that most of what little forest remains is both degraded and unprotected, and the majority of conservation areas are in non-forest habitats.

There is little of direct relevance to oriental birds, though some of the effects of selective logging on birds are mentioned in the chapter on forest wildlife. However, recent research has shown that some of the statements made here are incorrect; for instance, most terrestrial species, including Pittas and phasianids are often present in logged forests in good numbers. Whilst most OBC members are unlikely to buy this book (in view of its cost), it is a very useful source of reference. Birdwatchers tend to visit the same sites as their predecessors, but I would encourage you to consult this book since it may enable you to pinpoint areas of forest or conservation areas which are poorly known but worth visiting.

F Lambert

Stuebing, R. 1989. **Kinabalu Chorus: Songs of Kinabalu Birds.** Cassette tape. Sabah Parks, Kota Kinabalu M\$6.00.

This well produced cassette is a welcome addition to the very limited number of published sound recordings of Oriental birds. Just 30 species are featured but these include many of the specialities of Kinabalu National Park. Most are the common birds of the park, but there are also useful recording of some of the rarer or 'harder-to-see' species such as Kinabalu Serpent Eagle *Spilornis kinabaluensis*, Black-throated Barbet *Megalaima eximia*, Crimson-headed Partridge *Haematortyx sanguiniceps* and Red-breasted Partridge *Arborophila hyperythra*. There are also one or two species which, although they do occur within the park boundaries, are more typical of lowland habitats.

The quality of the recordings is very good and the tape is well produced. My only quibble is that the order of the recordings on the tape defies all taxonomic authorities and logic. Although this tape can be purchased at Kinabalu National Park it may well be difficult to find it outside Sabah.

Nigel Redman

Bernard H.-U. (ed.) 1991. **Insight Guide: South-East Asia Wildlife.** 430 pp; 38 maps, many colour photographs. Singapore: APA Publications. £11.95.

This is quite simply a lovely book which provides a mouth-watering introduction to the natural heritage of the four accessible countries of South-East Asia; Thailand, Malaysia (divided into West and East), Indonesia and the Philippines. The book has seven sections. The first sets the scene with introductory chapters on habitats, the various faunal groups and wildlife watching. Of particular interest to OBC members will be the essays by Pilai Poonswad on hornbills and by Phil Round on pittas.

The following five sections are headed according to country and are collections of essays on selected sites and areas where unspoilt nature can be found. Amongst these are articles on aspects of particular interest to the countries concerned, such as marine turtles (West Malaysia) and the Proboscis Monkey (East Malaysia). Each essay is by a leading biologist or conservationist in the region and readers will find a wealth of information presented in a clear and readable style, and illustrated by the lavish use of photographs, a characteristic of this series. However, this is not just a comfortable celebration of South-East Asian wildlife; the passions and concerns of the authors frequently emerge and for me this introduces a welcome cutting edge to their prose and a subtle conservation theme throughout the book.

The final section covering about 100 pages, is entitled 'Travel Tips' and is intended to provide factual information for the wildlife traveller. It seems to have been written for the general tourist and it may well be based on other Insight Guides. Pages of tips on what to wear when visiting temples, and on restaurant food, sports and television

could have been better used by giving, for example, information on what to wear in forests, equipment, wildlife photography and available field guides. A limited amount of information is given on how to get to the national parks covered in the guide, and this does include useful maps.

Insight Guides are reasonably priced and widely available. This addition to the series will contribute significantly to raising a wider awareness of the rich wildlife heritage of South-East Asia and the pressures which threaten its future. The production team and authors deserve congratulating for what, in my view, is an excellent book.

Paul Jepson

Perrins, C. M. (ed.). 1990. *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Birds*. 420 pp. Many colour illustrations. London: Headline. £30.00.

There have been many encyclopaedias of birds in recent years but, this is certainly one of the best. An impressive team of authors, artists, consultants and production staff have been assembled to produce this lavishly illustrated book.

The 34 pages of introduction succinctly cover such varied topics as bird biology, evolution, classification, geography, ecology, migration and conservation, as well as including two pages of *Guinness Book of Records*-style statistics. The bulk of the book, however, is devoted to the species accounts. These include representatives of each of the 176 bird families, and the selection reveals the full diversity and beauty of the world's birds. A double-page spread of illustrations is followed by a double-page spread of text describing the birds illustrated, and so on throughout the book. The illustrations are generally excellent as one would expect from the distinguished list of artists, and many species are shown in several plumages or races. The text is often fairly brief but informative. World range, habitat and size are given for each species, followed by two or three short paragraphs of additional information. A most useful feature at the end of the book is a complete checklist of the birds of the world. This is based on Howard and Moore's world checklist (1991 edition), and is coded with distribution according to zoogeographical regions and conservation status as determined by ICBP.

I have deliberately not tried to find errors and inaccuracies, but the Philippine Creepers (*Rhabdornithidae*) are omitted as an endemic Oriental family in the introduction, and Plain-headed Creeper *Rhabdornis inornatus* is not restricted to just Samar Island in the Philippines. This is undoubtedly a beautiful book and an excellent introduction to the birds of the world. My main criticism is the book's subtitle 'The Definitive Guide to Birds of the World': rather grand when only 1200 species out of the world's total of some 9600 are covered.

Nigel Redman

Announcements & Requests

International Symposium in India

An International Symposium on environmental and hormonal approaches to ornithology is being held in Garhwal Himalaya, India from 27 November to 1 December 1991. The symposium will comprise invited lectures and contributed papers with an emphasis on the environment and on birds' adaptation to the environment. The aims of the symposium are: to give an impetus to ornithological research in the Indian subcontinent; to highlight the contribution of ornithology to environmental conservation, socio-economic development and biological concepts; to enable Indian ornithologists to interact with scientists from other countries; to assemble together researchers, conservationists, managers and policy makers in order to evolve strategies for the effective management of Himalayan avifauna.

Before and during the symposium, participants will have a chance to visit the varied environments that exist around Srinagar Garhwal. Further inquiries should be addressed to Dr Asha Chandola-Saklani, PO Box 45, Garhwal University, Srinagar Garhwal, U.P. 246 174, India. FAX: 0135-28392; (International) 0091 135 28392. TELEX: 585-345 EBD IN; 585-232 PAL IN.

Wetland and Waterfowl Conservation Conference

A conference on wetland and waterfowl conservation in South-West Asia will be held in Karachi, Pakistan from 14 to 20 December 1991. Although the deadline for registration fell on 30 September, late submissions and further information should be sought from: The International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (IWRB), Gloucester, GL2 7BX, UK. FAX: (+453)890697. TELEX 437145 IWRB (G). PHONE: 0435 890 624.

AWB Small Grants Scheme

The Asian Wetland Bureau promotes the conservation and sustainable use of wetland resources in Asia. AWB activities are in four programme areas: biodiversity, water resources, awareness and institution strengthening, and wetland management and policy. In addition to undertaking projects using its own staff, AWB works extensively with local institutions and consultants and increasingly seeks to catalyse and support the efforts of local researchers. For this latter purpose, AWB has established the AWB Small Grants Scheme primarily with support from the John D & Catherine T MacArthur Foundation. Applications for grants are now invited, from Asian nationals, in conformance with the following guidelines. The proposed activities should fall within the AWB programme areas and preference will be given to those which:

- * concern a wetland of international importance;

- * include direct improvement of **wetland habitat conservation** and/or management;
- * include direct improvement of **awareness** of wetland values and/or management in local community;
- * obtain data useful for improved conservation of a **threatened species** (eg. refer to *Status Overview of Asian Wetlands*, Scott, D. A. and Poole C. M. 1989)
- * involve **training** of people directly involved in wetland management;
- * produce **tangible results** within a 12 month period;
- * are unlikely to be funded from **other sources**;
- * a grant will enable **additional funds** to be raised.

Incoming applications must be accompanied by a completed Project Concept Form (available from AWB). They will be reviewed by an AWB panel twice each year and several grants of between US\$300 - US\$2,000 can be allocated.

Successful applicants must sign and adhere to a simple contract that lists terms of reference, deadlines for reporting and schedule of payments.

Please direct applications and related correspondence to:

Small Grants Coordinator, Asian Wetland Bureau, IPT, Universiti Malaya, Lembah Pantai, 59100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Fax No: 60 3 757 1225

International projects with the Young Ornithologists' Club

The Young Ornithologists' Club (YOC) is the junior membership of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (United Kingdom). The Club is open to anyone aged 18 or under and currently has some 120,000 members. The YOC is next year embarking on two projects both involving international participation.

An *International Garden Bird Survey 1992* will take place on 25 and 26 January 1992. The idea is for participants all over the world to count as many bird species in one hour within their own garden or at a site near to their home.

The *International Penfriend Project 1992* links young people below the age of 18 who want to have a penfriend interested in birds. Anyone wanting to take advantage of this scheme should write down their name, address, age, interests and if possible enclose a photograph and send them to the address below.

For penfriend enquiries and to find out more about the garden bird survey contact: Joan Childs, Youth Unit, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, UK.

Fieldworkers wanted for research in Malaysia

I am currently conducting a study to estimate densities and population dynamics of birds (and bats) in Malaysian rainforest. The study involves extensive ringing, following of colour-marked birds, and surveys of singing birds. I am in need of volunteers to assist with this survey for 1 - 3 month periods between April and October 1992. Volunteers should be experienced at mist-netting and/or identifying Malaysian birds, and must be able to walk several km/day in hot, humid conditions, and still record data accurately, particularly colour combinations. Applicants would have to pay their own way to Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur), but I can cover expenses in the field. To apply, send cover letter and summary of relevant experience to Charles M. Francis at Centre for Tropical Conservation, Duke University, 3705-C Erwin Road, Durham, NC

27705, USA. (Fax 919-490-6718) until 1 April, 1991, then Zoology Department, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur 59100, Malaysia (Fax 03-757-1225).

I am also trying to prepare a series of reference tapes of Malaysian bird songs and calls to assist with the song surveys, and for possible publication. If anybody has good quality recordings of Malaysian bird songs, which they would be prepared to make available for this effort, please contact me, at the above addresses.

Recent Red-vented Cockatoo Sightings

Information is urgently needed on the status of the Red-vented Cockatoo *Cacatua haematuropygia* in the Philippines.

Recent information comprising details of sightings and their exact location would be gratefully received by Frank Lambert who is currently preparing conservation recommendations for this species which is believed to be seriously threatened by the wild bird trade. Please send information to Dr Frank Lambert, c/o International Council for Bird Preservation, 32 Cambridge Road, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0PJ, UK.



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BIRD PRESERVATION
FAUNA & FLORA PRESERVATION SOCIETY
CONSERVATION EXPEDITION COMPETITION



ARE YOU PLANNING AN EXPEDITION TO A DEVELOPING COUNTRY ?
DO YOU AIM TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ?
ARE YOU INVOLVING LOCAL PEOPLE IN YOUR WORK ?

THEN YOU COULD BE ELIGIBLE FOR A £3,000 BP CONSERVATION EXPEDITION AWARD

Each year, a total of £20,000 in grant funding is available through the *ICBP/FFPS Conservation Expedition Competition* in the following categories: *Tropical Rainforests, Wetlands, Oceanic Islands* and *Marine and Globally Threatened Species*. First prize in each category is £3,000 (half of which should be intended for local counterparts). There are also eight prizes of £1,000 for runners-up. All prize winners will automatically receive official ICBP/FFPS endorsement.

Applicants should follow the guidelines set out in the *ICBP/FFPS Conservation Expedition Guide*, which also provides important practical advice on how to organise an expedition. The competition is open to all expeditions involving young people and fulfilling the criteria above. Please write in the first instance,

to: Gary Allport, Expeditions Officer, ICBP, 32 Cambridge Road, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0PJ, UK. Final applications must be submitted in English by 31 December



THE BP CONSERVATION
EXPEDITION AWARDS

Kukila

The latest issue of the bulletin of the Indonesian Ornithological Society, *Kukila* (Volume 5[2]), is now available. It contains four main papers and eleven short communications, including: distribution - birds of the Bintuni Bay region of Irian Jaya; rare species - status of the White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni* in East Kalimantan; breeding - colonies of the Milky Stork *Mycteria cinerea* in South Sumatra; new records - Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus* in the Lesser Sundas. For information on subscription to *Kukila*, contact: The Editors, *Kukila*, P.O. Box 287/JKSMG, Jakarta, Selatan 12710A, Indonesia.



Recent Reports

These are largely unconfirmed records covering the period from February to July 1991. We urge that if they have not already done so, contributors provide full details to the relevant regional organisations.

CHINA

Interesting records continue to come in from Golmud, Qinghai province (JH). The following records were new for the province: A male Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus* from 11-24 May, a Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus* on 24 May, a Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* on 19 April, an Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* on 18 March, and at least five male Pallas's Reed-Buntings *Emberiza pallasi* between 16 April and 18 May. A Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus* on 25-27 May was, perhaps, the first definite record for the province. Single Barbary Falcons *Falco pelegrinoides babylonicus* on 28 March and 18 May were the second and third records for Qinghai. Three or four Slender-billed Gulls *Larus genei* between 26 March and 13 May were the second record for Qinghai and perhaps only the fourth for China. A female Pied Harrier *Circus melanoleucos* on 16 April and an Oriental Greenfinch *Carduelis sinica* on 15 May were the first for western Qinghai. New subspecies records for Qinghai were a Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava thunbergi* on 23 May and a White Wagtail *M. alba personata* on 2 May.

HONG KONG

New records for Hong Kong during the year included a male Ferruginous Pochard *Aythya nyroca* at Mai Po on 3 February, a White-browed Crake *Porzana cinerea* seen well at the same locality from 20-28 April (PL, PRK et al.), several Eurasian Skylarks *Alauda arvensis* in a lark flock on the landfill site near Mai Po on 23 February (PRK, PL, PA), a Pacific Swallow *Hirundo tahitica* also at Mai Po, on 30 March (MC), a Blunt-winged Warbler *Acrocephalus concinens* seen on 20 April and trapped the

following day at Mai Po, a Pale Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis unicolor* on Tai Po Kau on 5-6 April (PR), and seven to nine Japanese Waxwings *Bombycilla japonica* in the Lam Tseun Valley during the same period (JP et al.). A Common Ringed Plover *Charadrius hiaticula* seen from the Mai Po boardwalk on 29 March (MR, EL) was the second Hong Kong record. Hong Kong's second Long-tailed Jaeger *Stercorarius longicaudus* was seen flying over the beach by the High Island Reservoir dam on 18 May (AL). Of particular interest was a record count of 57 Black-faced Spoonbills *Platalea minor* at Mai Po on 14 February. Vagrant waders found during the period were a Little Stint *Calidris minuta* at Mai Po on 19 April (RL) and a Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* there on 20 April; with a possibly different individual again on 2 May (WY, ML et al.).

INDONESIA

JAVA

During a visit to Bromo/Semeru NP from 12-15 March (BvB), a group of six Little Grebes *Tachybaptus ruficollis* in full breeding plumage was observed on Pani lake, while a Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa* with five ducklings was seen on Kumbolo lake on 13th. During the descent of the south-east slopes of the mountain complex towards Senduro, a Salvadori's Nightjar *Caprimulgus pulchellus* was heard calling. On 19-21 March a swamp and mangrove area in the Citarum Delta, west Java was visited (BvB, IS, DH, M). Interesting observations included two single Sunda Coucals *Centropus nigrorufus* near Muara Gembong on 20th and 21st and Javan White-eye *Zosterops flavus* by the fish ponds at Tanjung Sedari on 20th. Also of note was a flock of c. 300 Garganey *Anas querquedula* near Muara Gembong on 21st. A search for Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* around some of the islands in Jakarta Bay during 21-23 May (BvB, IS, DH, M) produced only a single pair. However, three single Nicobar Pigeons *Caloenas nicobarica* were seen on Bokor Island and a flock of Lemon-bellied White-eyes *Zosterops chloris* on Untung Jawa Island; both on the 23rd. On 2 March, several Sharp-tailed Sandpipers *Calidris acuminata* were found in a flock of Wood Sandpipers *Tringa glareola* on the old airport at Kemayoran, Jakarta (BvB).

SUMATRA

During 22 March to 11 April peat-swamp forests in Riau province were visited (BvB), within the framework of an Asian Wetland Bureau survey programme. Milky Stork *Mycteria cinerea* was present on three of the lakes in the area; which were largely dry. The largest number recorded was on lake Serai, where 52 birds were seen on 31 March. Single Storm's Storks *Ciconia stormi* were seen twice along the riverbank near Besingin lake on 30 March and a roosting pair were found in logged forest along the Rokan river on 9 April. A number of Great Hornbills *Buceros bicornis* were observed in a fruiting fig vine at the latter locality. A single male Eastern Marsh-Harrier *Circus spilonotus* was observed on 1 April near the Siak Kecil river mouth and a Masked Finfoot *Heliopais personata* was present on 31 March and 29 April along the borders of the Siak Kecil river, east of lake Tanjung Pagar (Pepagat). Other noteworthy records included a Siberian Blue-Robin *Erithacus cyane* near the lake on Padang Island on 25

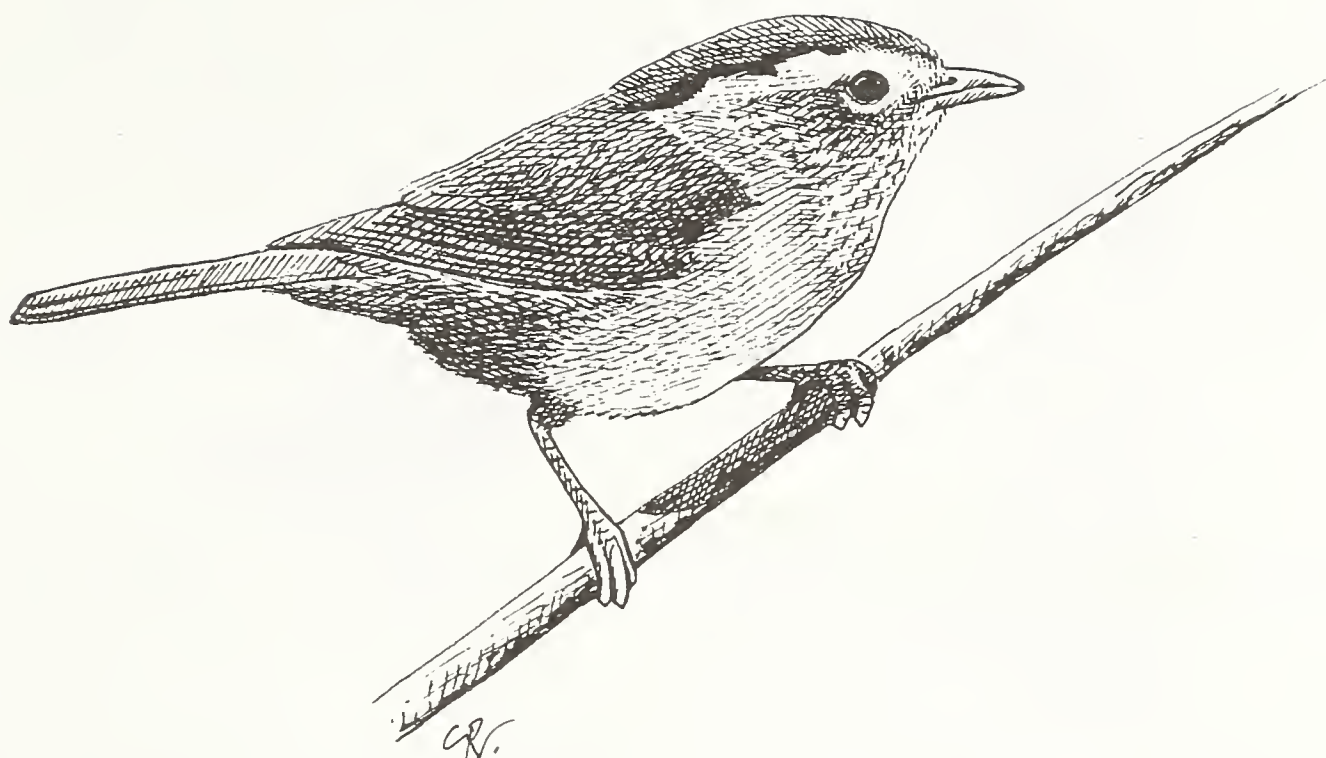
March, Red-throated Sunbird *Anthreptes rhodolaema* along the Rokan river on 9 April, Scarlet-breasted Flowerpeckers *Prionochilus thoracicus* in forest along the Rawa and Rokan rivers and along the Panjang straits, on 5 and 10 April respectively, and a single Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile* along the Rokan river on 10 April. Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis* appeared to be not uncommon in and around small towns and settlements such as Kurau, Bengkalis and Ujung Tanjung, on 13 April

THAILAND

Oriental Plovers *Charadrius veredus*, the first for Thailand, were found at Chanthaburi, with one on 15 March increasing to six on 29 March and three remaining until 2 April (DO). Single White-rumped Vultures *Gyps bengalensis*, now very rare in the country, were seen at km 40.5 on Doi Inthanon, Chiang Mai on 24 March (VK, AL) and at Ban Bantung, Satun on 6 June (RJ,RK). Encouraging was a flock of 36 Painted Storks *M. leucocephalus* seen flying west over Khao Randai, Huai Kha Khaeng WS on 28 June (RJ,RK). Good numbers of Asian Dowitchers *Limnodromus semipalmatus* were counted at Samut Sakhon on 7 April (JE, KK, PK, CR), with an estimated 550-700. There were several interesting records from the south. A Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* seen on the crossing between Ko Maa and Ko Phi Phi, Krabi on 2 May (JN, RO), was the second Thai record, although another was seen during April/May on route to Ko Similan (PH). A Masked Finfoot reported from the Krabi mangroves on 21 July (SK) appears to be the first summer record. An amazing 'fall' of over 100 migrant pittas consisting of approximately 90% Hooded *Pitta sordida* and 10% Blue-winged *P. moluccensis* was recorded on Ko Maa, Krabi on 27 April (SB, JC, CM). At least six Yellow-vented Pigeons *Treron seimundi* were seen on Phanoen Thung, Kaeng Krachan NP during April; there are only two previous Thai records. The most remarkable and unprecedented news comes from the same locality, where the presence of Ratchet-tailed Treepie *Temnurus temnurus* was confirmed after reported observations in 1990; on 5 May (TI, RL, SP, PS, PSa), 20 May (AK, SPa, SV) and 23 June (AK, AR, SPa); when two were seen. This year, up to eight displaying birds were seen on 17 February (SBC) and at least two during 7-9 April (JE, KK, SP, CR). A nest containing two young, perhaps the first known to science, was located on 1 May (PR, UT).

VIETNAM

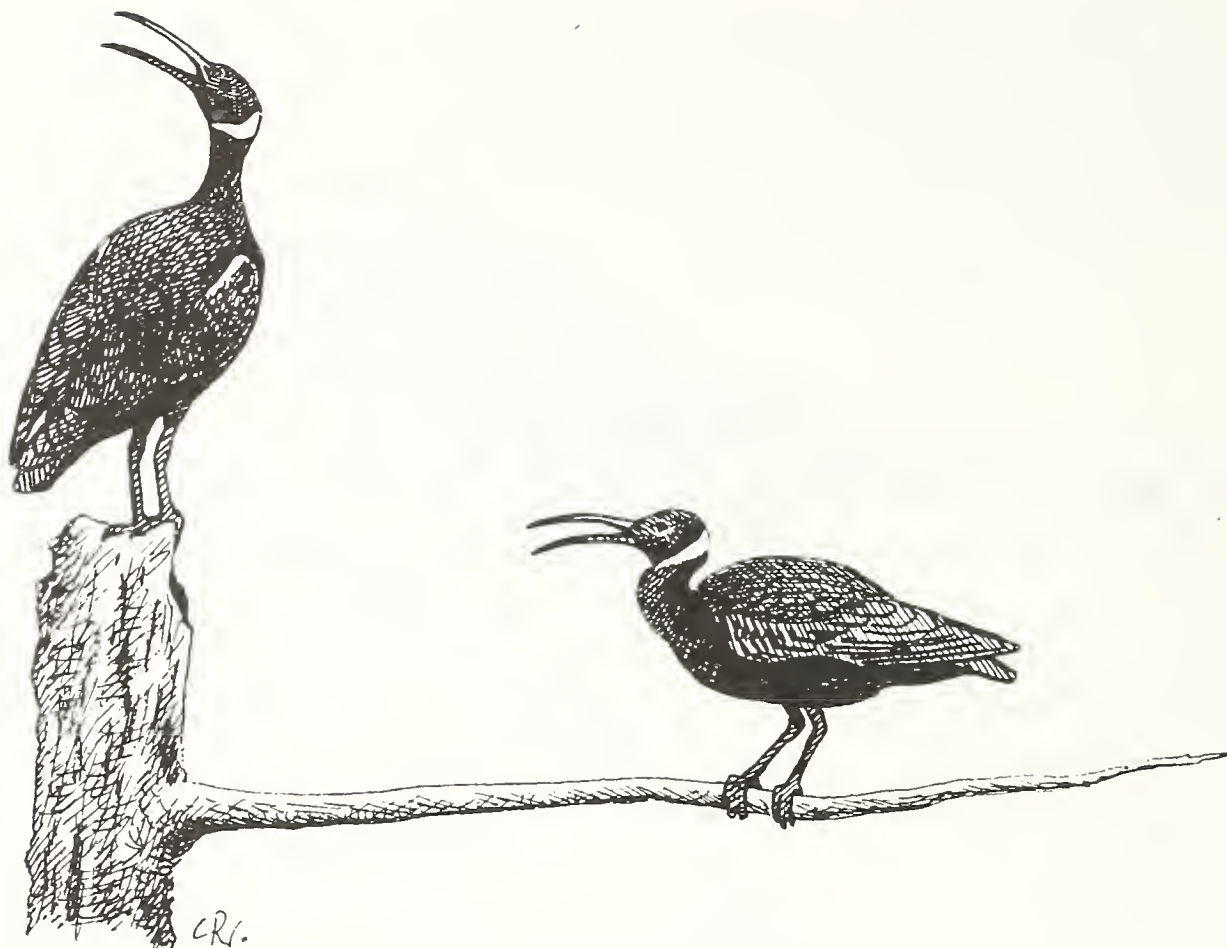
Once again, surveys were carried out at a number of localities in the country by a joint English and Vietnamese team (NC, JE, TL, CR) on behalf of the International Council for Bird Preservation. The most interesting discovery came in the form of a unique taxon of fulvetta *Alcippe* on previously unexplored Mt. Bi Doup on the Da Lat Plateau, Lam Dong Province. A number of birds were observed and one netted and photographed during 22 and 23 May (CR, JE). The bird shares characters of Spectacled Fulvetta *A. ruficapilla* and Streak-throated Fulvetta *A. cinereiceps*, but lacks the black and white panel in the primaries common to both. Its precise taxonomic status and affinities remain uncertain at present. At least three Crested Argus *Rheinartia ocellata* were heard calling on the upper slopes of Mt. Bi Doup, confirming the presence of the



Alcippe sp. drawn from field observations by Craig Robson

species on the Da Lat Plateau; a considerable range extension. On the lower, bracken-covered slopes of the mountain, a number of Pale-footed Bush-Warblers *Cettia pallidipes* were found holding territory during 22-25 May; a remarkable southerly range extension for the species. Up to 14 Pale-capped Pigeons *Columba punicea* were found feeding on fruiting trees with large numbers of parakeets, bulbuls and starlings on the Da Dung river, north-west of Da Lat, on 1 and 2 June; welcome records of this little-known threatened bird. The endemic Black-hooded Laughingthrush *Garrulax milleti* was found at a number of localities on the Da Lat and Di Linh Plateaus, Lam Dong Province, the first records for some 30 years. A number of rare endemic subspecies were also observed at various localities on the Da Lat Plateau, including Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus robinsoni*, Short-tailed Scimitar-Babbler *Jabouilleia danjoui danjoui*, Spot-breasted Laughingthrush *Garrulax merulinus annamensis* and Rufous-backed Sibia *Heterophasia annectans eximia*. Further south-west, in Nam Bai Cat Tien NP, Dong Nai Province, three White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni* were observed displaying near Dac Lua on 13 and 14 June. Local people reported that six were present in the same area earlier in the year. This is the first record of this threatened species in continental South-East Asia for many years. In the same area, two partridges believed to be Orange-necked *Arborophila davidi* were observed briefly on a bamboo covered hill on 21, 22 and 24 June. The species is only known from two specimens collected to the north of the national park in 1927.

A male Black-breasted Quail *Coturnix coromandelica* found for sale in Da Lat on 28 May had been trapped nearby in February and represents the first record for Vietnam. Also new for the country were 41 Red-necked Phalaropes *Phalaropus lobatus* on salt



White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni* by Craig Robson

pans by the south-west shore of Cam Ranh Bay, Dac Lac Province on 18 April. 14 were seen there again on 12 May and another two by the causeway at Lang Co, Thua Thien Province on 20 April. Also at Cam Ranh Bay on 18 April were eight Chinese Egrets *Egretta eulophotes*, including seven in full summer plumage, the second record for Viet Nam. An Oriental Plover on salt pans north of Phan Thiet on 12 May, was the second for Vietnam. Another vagrant shorebird, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was seen at the same locality on 18 April. Other interesting records during the expedition included a Schrenck's Bittern *Ixobrychus eurythmus* near the headquarters of Bach Ma NP, Thua Thien on 25 April, a Pied Falconet *Microhierax melanoleucos* west of Khe Che, Thua Thien Province on 8 May, a Blyth's Kingfisher *Alcedo hercules* in Bach Ma NP on 30 April, a Grey-Streaked Flycatcher *Muscicapa griseisticta*, Vietnam's second, also at Bach Ma NP on 24-26 April, and a Narcissus Flycatcher *Ficedula narcissina* at the same locality on 23 April.

Records were collated by Craig Robson from observations and contributions by the following: B. van Balen (BvB), S. Buckton (SB), J. Chants (JC), Nguyen Cu (NC), J. Eames (JE), Dwi Sutanto Hadi (DH), P. Heath (PH), Hong Kong Birdwatching Society (PA, MC, AL, EL, ML, PL, RL, JP, MR, WY), J. Hornskov (JH), T. Intawasa (TI), R. Jugmongkol (RJ), A. Kasem (AK), P. Kennerley (PRK), S. Khruawan (SK), K. Komolphalin (KK), P. Komolphalin (PK), R. Kutkaew (RK), V. Kanyathong (VK), Truong Van La (TL), R. Lekvanit (RL), A. Liukiratiyukun (AL), Mutiarina (M), C. McGuigan (CM), J. Nilsson (JN), R. Ottvall (RO), S. Pakdeephuvadol (SPa), S. Pleumshoosak (SP), A. Riwalkeratiyukun (AR), C. Robson (CR), P. Round (PR), P. Sachakamol (PS), P. Sangkaew (PSa), Ismu Sutanto Suwelo (IS), Siam Birdwatchers Club (SBC), U. Treesucon (UT).

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Guidelines for contributors

Whilst the Editor is always pleased to discuss possible contributions with potential authors, and to advise on preparation, it would be helpful if the following guidelines could be adhered to:

1. Articles These should be written clearly, preferably typed, on one side of the page, with all lines double-spaced, leaving wide margins, and should be no longer than 2,000 words. Scientific names should appear at the first mention of each species or, if all species appear in a table, they may be given there instead. Scientific names should, where possible, follow King *et al.* (1975) *A field guide to the birds of South-East Asia*.

Any tables to accompany articles should be prepared on separate pieces of paper, and be thoroughly checked. Titles of tables should be self-explanatory. Diagrams should be clearly drawn, in ink, ideally 15cm wide and 11cm high. References should be cited in alphabetical order at the end of the paper in the same style used in this Bulletin.

It would be helpful if two copies of each contribution could be submitted.

2. Recent Reports These should follow the format in the current edition of the OBC Bulletin, and be sent to OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, UK.
3. News/Information Typed or handwritten contributions should be sent to R. Grimmett, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, UK.

Although every effort is made to retain all articles in their submitted form, the Editorial Committee reserves the right to make changes that it deems necessary, and, in a minimum of cases, without prior reference to the author. It is assumed that all contributors submitting material understand and accept these conditions.

For News and Views, Book Reviews, Announcements and Letters, the deadline for submission of material is 1 March (May Bulletin) and 1 September (November Bulletin). Recent Reports are needed one month earlier. The deadlines do not apply to main articles which will be published as soon as possible after acceptance by the Editorial Committee.

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